

**POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH DISCOURSE:  
CREATING (MEXICAN) AMERICAN CHILDREN AS THE “OTHER”**

A Dissertation

by

ARACELI RIVAS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2005

Major Subject: Educational Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

Postcolonial Analysis of Educational Research Discourse: Creating (Mexican)

American Children as the “Other.” (August 2005)

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Research is a modern practice whose production of knowledge needs to be critically and continually examined. The pursuit of knowledge is not a neutral and objective endeavor; it is a socially situated practice that is embedded within power/knowledge/culture configurations. Historically, research discourses have labeled and positioned minority groups to an inferiority/superiority matrix, illustrating how research can create an oppressive otherness/alterity. Thus, the general purpose of this study was to critically critique research from the postcolonial perspectives of alterity and colonial discourse. In particular, the study sought to deconstruct the conceptual systems that create the alterity of (Mexican) American children within research discourse.

The study was in part guided by Said’s (1978) analysis of the colonial discourse in *Orientalism*. There were two parts to the study that analyzed one hundred and nineteen research documents from 1980-2004. Phase I identified the discursive themes that construct that alterity of (Mexican) Americans by employing a qualitative content analysis method. Phase II employed a discourse analysis method to deconstruct the conceptual systems and sites of power in the production of knowledge that position (Mexican) Americans as objects of research.

The analysis disclosed that the conceptual systems that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans are framed by modern and colonial research structures that project a hegemonic Westernized vision of research, education, and human existence. Under these conceptual structures, there are multiple levels of alterity ascribed to (Mexican) Americans that continue to (re)inscribe positions of inferiority; as objects of research, they are constantly placed in a comparative framework against the dominant cultural norms. Some of the key sites of power in the production of knowledge about (Mexican) Americans are illustrated by the researcher (as *author*) and the university (as a privileged location). The conclusions problematized research as an apparatus that reconstructs hierarchical differences and reinscribes colonial relationships where the Other is defined only from a Western and culturally dominant perspective of separateness.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my Creator whose infinite love has given me the gift of life.

I also dedicate it to my parents, Laura Alicia and Gildardo, my brothers and sisters, as well as my three little angels.

Lastly, I dedicate this to my ancestors, the Mechica people, especially my abuelas (grandmothers), Laura and Dolores.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Research is a systematic process of inquiry that has become established not only in the academy with its respective disciplines and fields of knowledge, but also institutionalized in governments, industries, corporations, and special interest groups (Smith, 2002). Research is embedded in cultural practices that would seek to understand the natural and social world. However, research is not a neutral, objective practice that is legitimated solely on the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of human kind. It is also a social construction based on modernist/Enlightenment ideologies of progress and liberalism that are historically specific (modern science) and culturally distinct (the West). The enterprise of research has been accepted without reference to the voices of indigenous and minority groups, its colonial/Enlightenment/modern history has been treated as if unproblematic. Research is an enterprise embedded in social and power relations that perpetuate colonial/modernist structures of physical and intellectual domination/oppression for non-Western peoples (Smith, 2002). The historical and continued imposition of Western research on non-Western/minority groups necessitates a continuous and critical evaluation of its practices, effects, and equally importantly its conceptual systems. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the conceptual systems that have constructed (Mexican) Americans in research discourses within an educational framework.

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to critically examine the conceptual systems of research with a general emphasis on the discourses that create the Other. The Other in Western research practice is represented by indigenous groups or other minority groups such as African Americans, women, and children who in a variety of ways have been objectified by the construction of science and the belief in science and therefore, placed in an inferior position of existence (Burman, 1994; Cannella, 1997; Smith, 2002).

Discourse as conceptualized by Foucault (1972) provides the analytical space to examine the relationship amongst knowledge, power, and language. Moreover, a postcolonial lens applied to research discourse displays the configurations of power, knowledge, and culture (Said, 1978). This particular study, specifically examined the construction of (Mexican) <sup>1</sup>Americans in educational research discourse. The overarching objective is 1) to identify the conceptual frameworks that create the Other, (Mexican) American children, while 2) exposing the sites of power that allow for this minority group to be used as an object of research. The following two sets of questions are considered in this study:

- Conceptual Frameworks that Create the Other
  1. Through what philosophical lens are (Mexican) Americans represented?
  2. How are forms of knowledge associated with and/or against (Mexican) Americans?

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<sup>1</sup>*Mexican* is placed in parentheses to separate it from the *American* signifier, which is a geopolitical marker that derives its meaning from the modern construction of nation/state and that has particular historical formations (e.g. the colonization and naming of the Americas continent). Thus, the parentheses stand to highlight the difference between an ascribed geopolitical label and the subjective identification to the Mexican/Mexican cultural heritage.

3. How are (Mexican) Americans represented in research design, implementation, and results?

- Sites of Power that Construct Minorities as Objects of Research

1. How are the discourses legitimated?

2. Who is conducting the research and where is it conducted?

3. Who is funding the research projects?

4. Where is the research presented and displayed?

5. How are the research/knowledge discourses creating the alterity of the (Mexican) American?

## **RATIONALE**

Discourses of research are embedded in taken for granted assumptions that have local and particular historical biases which project a global statement (Mignolo, 2000) about the order and position of things, ideas, and people (Foucault, 1970). The Enlightenment/modern philosophy with its progressive, individualist emancipatory framework provided the context for the emergence of research as a construction and creation of dominant research practices. Research associated with the emerging natural and social sciences fostered a *new* scientific method that was believed to be the avenue for changing the world and the emancipation of man from religious dogmatism and traditional political authority (Haan, Bellah, Rabinow, & Sullivan, 1983). This shift in Western thought constituted not only a new mode of inquiry, but reflected the ideology of modernity. The Enlightenment/modernity ideology and its counterparts (the scientific enterprise and technology) contained a benign vision of modernity as a

progressive stage in the development of human history. During the rise and prominence of the social sciences post WWII and the continued withdrawal of colonialist powers from the land of those that had been physically occupied, this optimism was perpetuated by visions of modernization and economic development. “Underdeveloped countries” were constituted and “theories and methods of the social sciences were automatically” accepted in discourses of “human betterment” (Haan et al., 1983, p. 4-5).

The current conceptualization and practice of modern research at its most fundamental level contains the Enlightenment’s concept of progress, a notion clearly expressed in practical research functions: description, prediction, improvement, and explanation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Progress has been and is believed to be laboriously achieved through the slow accumulation of facts derived from ‘blocks’ of research and the systematization of knowledge. Thus, the formation and solidification of the scientific enterprise is a multilevel metanarrative of progress that constitutes science/research as constantly forming blocks of knowledge, sometimes with revolutionizing paradigms (Kuhn, 1996), while simultaneously representing itself as a tool for societal progress and development.

The *eclipsed*<sup>2</sup> side of the Enlightenment’s anticipated benefits of scientific and quasi-scientific knowledge production (along with the project of modernity) has been exposed in the twentieth century from a variety of positions. To begin, the history of Enlightenment/modernist project is not separate from the history of 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>I borrow this term from Dussel (1995) to describe the hidden and problematic aspects of colonialism and modernity since it seems to capture the magnitude of its detrimental impact over the American continent and the rest of colonized the nations.

century colonization/imperialism that has led to current globalization movements (Dussel, 1995/2000; Mignolo, 2000). Science and the practice of research is the embodiment of a historical project embedded within both imperialist practices and continued colonial structures (Harding, 1998; Kavita, 1998; Smith, 2002). Second, the history of Western modern science as an Enlightenment/modern project has also contradicted the discourse of scientific progress. The eugenics movement stands as one of the most extreme cases in which science demonstrated the devastating interplay between research, racism, and power—research is clearly implicated in the creation of conditions that support oppression and exploitation. On the political front, the momentous climate of the 1960's and 70's in the West brought to light the relationship between power and the scientific enterprise. This was reflected in the social sciences self-critical contentions that “anthropology had been nothing but a tool of imperialism,” “sociology an instrument of control of the working class and minorities,” and “psychology a device for social discipline and the increase of productivity” (Haan et al., 1983, p. 5). Indeed, the United States government provided a significant amount of financial resources toward social science research and economic development projects in so called “third world” nations in order to maintain/gain lead during the cold war era (Simpson, 1998)<sup>3</sup>. On the intellectual front, feminism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism have challenged the Enlightenment/modernist claim to science as objective and as the only legitimate approach to knowledge. In brief, scholars in the West and non-West began and continue to uncover, dismantle, and

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<sup>3</sup>Simpson (1998) provides examples of several major research projects in the fields of psychology, economics, and media that were specifically funded by the United States government.



contest Western science's Eurocentric, hegemonic, racist, and gender biased frameworks. The significance of the historical implications and lived consequences of research in the social and natural sciences lies in the necessity of a continuous and critical reflection within the scientific enterprise to examine its material and conceptual oppressive functions.

Therefore, critical research requires a re-examination, consciousness, and a cultural critique of the "subjective, intersubjective, and normative reference claims" embedded in the practices and discourses of research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 140). For example, discourses have named/labeled/structured (Foucault 1970) non-Western people to inherently inferior positions—they are described as "culturally deprived" and "disadvantaged" or "at risk" (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). Underlying these Western regimes of knowledge there is an alterity/identity matrix (McNaught, 1996) that constructs and colonizes the Other/non-Western subject. This dissertation finds its rationale from the notion of cultural critique at the conceptual level of discourse. The study is not exhaustive of the many possibilities of critique nor does it deny the material realities and ethical implications of research on human beings, especially on minority groups that have experienced the consequences of tyrannical research projects (e.g. African-Americans and the eugenic movement). Material realities that create social oppression need to be confronted. But so do the conceptual systems of research and the respective discourses that represent and continue to place non-Western people to inferior positions of existence.

## OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

Postcolonial analysis will be employed as the theoretical approach for various reasons. First of all, it recognizes the limits of traditional Western theoretical orientations in the understanding of contemporary global phenomenon that contains physical, economic, and intellectual histories and multifaceted consequences tied to colonization (Loomba, 1998); second, it allows for the contextualization of transnational subjectivities such as those of (Mexican) Americans as postcolonial subjects.

Postcolonial theory in a broad sense attempts to capture the material, intellectual and subjective effects of colonialism/modernism in addition to generating an avenue for decolonization.

The (Mexican) American group is the specific *ethnic* group that is selected for this study for the following reasons. First of all, one reason is the historical background of (Mexican) Americans. (Mexican) Americans originate partly from one of the six oldest world civilizations whose high scientific and cultural achievements were irrevocably and violently obliterated by European conquest and colonization. (Mexican) Americans have a five hundred year history of colonization from two imperialistic nations: Spain (16<sup>th</sup> century), and the United States (19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the subjectivity of (Mexican) Americans has been constructed by two Western hegemonic (non-scientific and scientific) discourses in two different time periods. Regardless of the geopolitical space, in Mexico (as Mexico Americanos) or in the United States (as Mexican-Americans), historically, they constitute one of the oldest postcolonial subjects

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<sup>4</sup> The French presence in Mexico is considered an intervention not colonization (Suchlicki, 2001).

of the modern era<sup>5</sup>. Second, although minority groups in the United States may share similar colonizing research frameworks, I find it necessary to go beyond the traditional racial binary of Whites/African-Americans because this approach has the danger of erasing the different histories and structures of oppression (Pedraza, 2000). Third, (Mexican) Americans constitute one of the largest growing minority populations in the United States (Ramirez, 2004). Therefore, there are important educational, social, and political implications for the current representations of (Mexican) Americans in research/sciences, media, and government.

## **ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

Chapter II is divided in four major sections. The first section of Chapter II discusses some of the elements that shaped modern research practices. This section also identifies current colonizing practices in Western research as identified by Smith (2002); therefore, the role of theory, race, racial statistics, and group classification in Western research are discussed. The second section revisits the power and subjective issues related to the relationship between researchers and the researched which were brought forth by critical scholars back in the 1970s. The third section provides an overview of some of the issues that have and continue to affect the education of (Mexican) American children. The fourth section provides an in depth discussion of the theoretical framework of postcolonial critique as an approach that examines the construction of the

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<sup>5</sup> Originally, I included myself as part of the (Mexican) American group. Then I strategically decided not include myself with a “we” reference because it reinforced the colonial binary of us (we Mexican Americans) vs. them (the Western, white). In other words, I would be subscribing to the pervasive colonial mentality that separates/divides. So “they” the Mexican American culture seemed more appropriate for this reason but more objectifying and impersonal (although I consider myself a postcolonial subject and hold great respect and appreciation to my ancestral indigenous traditions and people both here and in Mexico).

Other. It discusses the power/knowledge/culture systems that create the postcolonial subject through various social discourses. This section provides the background for the study's methodology.

Chapter III discusses the methodology employed in this study—postcolonial theory. It reviews the concept of alterity and the colonial discourse as exemplified by Said (1978) in *Orientalism*. It explains how Said (1978) work is used as a template for the design of the study. The study is divided into sets of analysis (Phase I and Phase II). This chapter explains the methods in Phase I (content analysis) and Phase II (discourse analysis). Phase I focuses on *what is said* about (Mexican) Americans and Phase II highlights the conceptual systems embedded in research discourses that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans. A discussion about the procedures in the selection of the 119 research documents employed by the study is also provided.

Chapter IV and Chapter V provide the results of the study. Chapter IV presents the discursive themes that construct alterity of (Mexican) Americans (Phase I). Chapter V highlights the conceptual frameworks and sites of power that construct (Mexican) Americans as objects of research (Phase II). These two sets of results are interconnected; however, the second analysis critically deconstructs research as a social practice. Chapter VI provides an overview of the results. It also discusses the implication of the results: 1) research as a colonial apparatus that (re)produces difference; 2) the researcher and research as Western, modern, and colonial; 3) a *will to truth* is a *will to power*; and 4) the need to reconsider the purpose of research.

## PERSPECTIVES AND POSSIBILITIES

First, this dissertation does not intend to criticize the social sciences or to declare that research is futile because it is a social construction with multiple representations of the Other. Rather, this research provides a critical reflective lens with which to examine Western research discourse and find the underlying structures that *Other*. This study is not presented as *truth*; rather, it is presented as one of the many perspectives that provide a window into the production of the Western regimes of knowledge.

Secondly, postcolonial theory, as any other theoretical approach has conceptual boundaries and limitations. Third world scholars view postcolonial theory with skepticism due its potential to appropriate the colonial experience of the subaltern/Other (Smith, 2002). Furthermore, although it offers a theoretical approach that speaks about the importance of examining the present colonial/modern legacies, most of the early literature in post-colonial theory has emerged from the decolonized world of the twentieth century that theorizes mostly from the British imperial discourse. Thus, for the most part, it has omitted the extensive historical effects of the conquest, colonization, and globalization movements of Latin America. This is clearly acknowledged by Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin, (2001) who comment that Latin America's "antiquity and character of its colonization, the long standing reality of its hybridized cultures, the 'continental' sense of difference which stems from a shared colonial language, the intermittent emergence of contestatory movements in cultural production—all radically widen the scope of post-colonial theory" (p.202). The theoretical approach employed by this dissertation provides a small but significant step towards the integration of

postcolonial theory into the experience of Latin Americans—specifically, (Mexican) Americans—in addition to expanding its application in educational research.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapter II consists of four sections that examine the construct of modern research and reflects upon the relationship between researchers and researched in order to discuss how this social practice has Othered (Mexican) Americans in educational research. This chapter also expounds on postcolonial critique in order to provide the theoretical background for the study. The first section of this chapter presents an overview of some of the critical formations of modern research-- Enlightenment/modernism, racialized discourse, theory, writing, history, and patriarchy. They are referred to as formations because they represent both social constructs and social practices that dynamically interact with one another while also progressively transforming over time (this is specially the case for racialized discourses and modern research methodologies). The intention is not to present a historical review of science/social sciences. Rather, this section deconstructs some of the key formations that intricately structure modern research. The second section reflects upon the social relationship between the researchers and the researched as embedded in asymmetrical power differentials as well as subjectivity. The subjectivity of the researcher raises the questions of the racialized identities and the right of researchers to research and represent others, especially indigenous and/or minority groups. The purpose of the third section on (Mexican) American educational research is to contextualize the practice of modern research as colonialist practice that has historically objectified and positioned this ethnic group to an inferior position through the discourses of intellectual and cultural

deficiency. This section also touches upon bilingualism/bilingual education and segregation as some of the key socio-political and historical polemics that continue to affect the education of (Mexican) Americans. Finally, the fourth section provides the general background on postcolonial/tri-continental critique and it also introduces the concept of Other as theorized by postcolonial theorizing and exemplified by the Said's work on *Orientalism* (1978). Taking from Dussel's (1995) historico-philosophical work, the concept of the postcolonial subject is amplified in order to establish (Mexican) Americans within a postcolonial/Tricontinental critique. This section is particularly significant since it provides the theoretical framework for the methodology of this study.

## **FORMATIONS OF MODERN RESEARCH**

Modern research as a construct is a product of historical structures and influences. This section first discusses the Enlightenment movement as one of the most salient historical influences where classification, categorization, and Cartesian assumptions emerged as some of the main foundations of modern research. Attention is also given to racialized discourse because it is a significant historical and current social structure that is quite visible as a research variable and whose colonial legacy continues to be a signifier of difference. In addition, the deconstruction of research necessitates an analysis of patriarchal configurations which have dominated and continue to influence Western research. Finally, modern research is further examined in its conceptual levels—writing, theory, and history—where they stand as key sites of Western intellectual colonialism.



## The Matrix of Social Science Research

The formations of modern research can be traced back to the Enlightenment movement where a system of interrelated ideas (reason, empiricism, science, universalism, progress, individualism, freedom, uniformity of human nature, and secularism) influenced the birth of the social sciences (Hamilton, 1992). Additionally, the Enlightenment's modernities are imprinted with Western imperialism as reflected by the "struggle between the interest and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other" (Smith, 2002, p. 2). At the core of the long history of elements that shape modern research is the legacy that "begins with the distance between primitive and civilized peoples that gave rise to a science of our humanity" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 25).

The Enlightenment movement is considered the matrix of the social sciences because it provided multiple value structures that formed research practices. The categorization and classification of nature, cultures, and peoples represent one of the most salient structures of modern research in both the natural and social sciences. Historically, the practice of classification can be found in Aristotle's philosophy but it was not until the Enlightenment that it was applied as a fundamental scientific methodology (Lovejoy, 1960 cited in Goldberg, 1993, p. 49) —giving impetus to the sciences of difference (Willinsky, 1998). Europe developed sciences of difference (e.g. anthropology) to make sense of the new world they stumble upon and *invented*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> O'Gorman (1961) philosophical-historical work challenged the notion of the discovery of the Americas by exposing how the Americas was conceived according to European a priori notions —thus, invented and not discovered.

(O’Gorman, 1961) ultimately resulting in “habits of mind that now need to be identified” and that “contribute to the educated imagination” of a divided world based on the notions of race, culture, and nation (Willinsky, 1998, p. 19). Furthermore, although categories and classification systems about the natural world existed in other civilizational knowledge/science systems, a major difference formed under the modern/colonial Western science. This major difference had to do with the Western’s science *will to truth* (Said, 1978) and *will to power* (Quijano, 2000) which imposed its own system of order and value to the *new world*—thus, Western science incorporated people and natural world of the Americas into its evaluative classification systems of knowledge (Salvatore, 1996). However, the sciences of difference that evolved under imperialism did not remain static.

Categorization and classification as an inherited structure of modern research had, within its internal Eurocentric tradition, major shifts of thought at the end of the sixteenth century (Foucault, 1970). “Resemblance, which had long been the fundamental category of knowledge—both the form and content of what we know—became disassociated in an analysis based on terms of identity and difference” (Foucault, 1970, p. 54). Therefore, the philosophical approach to knowledge shifted toward the Cartesian thought of “identity, difference, measurement, and order” that became signified by the scientific table (Foucault, 1970, p.52). The comparison of two or more things inherent in the scientific table encouraged “increasingly fine calculations of difference, row by row, column by column” by those engaged in “imperialism’s

adventure in learning” that used “tables, graphs, and diagrams aplenty to enumerate, order, and identify a world of differences” (Willinsky, 1998, p. 27).

Cartesian assumptions (e.g. quantification signified by numerical tables) have been critiqued for objectifying, reducing, and essentializing human beings and human experience (e.g. McCarthy & Chochlow, 1993). Zuberi (2001) argues that the empirical social sciences employment of both descriptive and inferential tables (yielding numerical description to multiple aspects of the social world) only have significance within a specific social purpose (e.g. educational policy). In addition, inferential statistics as a mathematical branch has been critiqued for its racialized discourse in intelligence measurement (Gould, 1996) and misconstrued racial statistics (Zuberi, 2001). The comparative framework used to define differences among various groups has also been critiqued for its application of a standardized human model—the Eurocentric model (Azibo, 1988). The implication of such critiques of the Cartesian assumptions in the social sciences is that it also reveals other interrelated discourses that underlie the formation of modern research—such is the case of the racialized discourses.

### **Racialized Discourse**

According to Scheurich & Young (2002), all research epistemologies (e.g. positivist, postpositivist, neorealism, interpretativism, constructionisms, critical traditions, postmodern, or poststructural) can be analyzed from the perspective of epistemological racism. They distinguish epistemological racism from the common notions of individual, institutional, and social racism by analyzing from the depths of civilization where “the most primary assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology),

the ways of knowing that reality (epistemology), and the disputational contours of right and wrong or morality and values (axiology)—in short, the presumptions about the real, the true, and the good”—are established (p.56). Scheurich & Young (2002) propose that an analysis at this level reveals whether epistemologies contain racist structures or not. For Smith (2002), Western research clearly represents an oppressive racist epistemology that “assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings” (p. 56).

Furthermore, the examination of racist epistemologies also necessitates an analysis of domination and subordination for the reason that when any group—within a large, complex civilization—significantly dominates other groups for hundreds of years, the ways of the dominant group (its epistemologies, its ontologies, its axiologies) not only become the dominant ways of that civilization, but these ways also become so deeply embedded that they typically are seen as ‘natural’ or appropriate norms rather than as historically evolved social constructions (Standfield, 1985 cited in Scheurich & Young, 2002, p. 58).

Consequently, all social practices project a particular group’s social cultural history that either represents the dominant group or can be situated in relation to this dominant civilization. An analysis of epistemological racism necessitates then a closer examination of racialized discourses that have been developing and transforming since the seventeenth century (Goldberg, 1993).

Racialized discourses characterize one of the most common social practices in the world today (e.i. Said, 1978; Hall 1992; Scheurich & Young, 2002; Smith, 2002; Stanfield, 1993). The modern origins of the racialized discourse are embedded mostly in the development of Western thought (Hall, 1992). According to Golberg, (1993), notions of difference existed in Greek philosophy as well as medieval art and

literature based on “rationally defined categories of inclusion and exclusion” (e.g. slave/master and monster/humans) that later provided a template for racial categorization (p.23). However, during the medieval period the template of inclusion and exclusion did not hold a categorical space for racial differentiation. The categorical space for racial differentiation began to occur when Europe came across seemingly different people, the Savage Man, replacing the medieval folk monster with a new psychological and moral space within each individual. The Savage Man symbolized lack of reason, discipline, culture, civilization, and sense of morality. This irrational and wild self—the Other within—that required “repression, denial, and disciplinary constraint” was projected onto those judged by Christianity and ruled under imperialism (Golberg, 1993, p.23-24). Consequently, a “shift from medieval premodernity to modernity is in part the shift from a religiously defined to a racially defined discourse of human identity and personhood” (Golberg, 1993, p.24). Ultimately, race, as a sign and signifier of group differentiation, became increasingly central and constitutive of modernity.

Racialized discourses contain what Golberg (1993) refers to as a set of broad preconceptual elements (primitives) that structure, (re)form, and (in)scribe “racialized social conditions of violation and violence” (p.49). The primitive elements include: 1) classification, order, value, and hierarchy; 2) differentiation and identity; 3) discrimination and identification; 4) exclusion, domination, subjection, and subjugation; 5) entitlement and restriction; and 6) other broader socio-political concepts such as gender, class, and nation.<sup>7</sup> In sum, these preconceptual elements that (in)form and

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<sup>7</sup> For an in depth discussions on these primitives/preconceptual elements refer to Goldberg (1993).

legitimate social practices manifest power relations. According to Goldberg (1993) the differentiation of people based on ethnicity/race is not necessarily racist. However, differentiation implicates the formation of a racial/ethnic identity based on group identification that fundamentally leads to the creation of Otherness—the “discrimination against the racially defined other becomes at once the exclusion of the different” (p.51). Therefore, the elaboration of racial differences infused with the elements of exclusion and inclusion (e.g. that determine who is rational, normal, human, slave, superior, citizen) form a *differential exclusion* that underlies the superstructure of the racist expression.

This concept of *differential exclusion* is particularly relevant to the practice of research and the production of knowledge about the Other. The exclusion of difference involves a process of determining what stands for *difference* (e.g. racial/gender) that in turn is filtered by multiple and inherited forms of rationality—classification, order, and value. Classification itself implies the systemization of information—the ordering of data. The ordering of data then involves a value system that establishes what data or information is considered relevant. Value systems also entail principles of social organization (e.g. units of analysis and rules of interaction) and the assumed norms (e.g. behavior). For instance, the concept of Natural Law, the belief in Reason, and faith in science characterized some of the most influential Western value systems. As a result, it has led to an analysis of cultures as self-contained and coherent units of analysis whose findings are believed to provide general laws but whose assumptions reveal the construction of truth (*will to truth*) and objectivity in Western thought (Rosaldo, 1989).

Thus the interplay between classification, order, and value has substantial consequences in the production of knowledge, as well as the practices and discourses of research because it brings into question whose cultural values determine *difference*, how these cultural differences are analyzed, and how these differences become ordered, categorized, and classified.

Lastly, the principle of racial hierarchy has an extensive genealogy that will only be discussed briefly in this section. Racial classification stemmed from classification systems that ordered human beings based on the assumption of what *natural* (inherited or environmental) differences that ranked peoples according to Western value of superiority and inferiority (Golberg, 1993). This ranking of human beings derived from Aristotle's *hierarchy of being* and the principle of gradation that, once embraced by Christianity, was enhanced by religious concepts of morality. The "full weight" of the constitution of racial hierarchy from the classification system solidified in the eighteenth century when "science and rationality, philosophy, aesthetics, and religion thus merged to circumscribe European representations of others" (Golberg, 1993, p.50). Indeed, Said's (1978) *Orientalism* clearly demonstrates the intricate discursive formation of a racialized discourse between the West and Orient during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hall (1992) also refers to the racialized framework created about the non-Western world as the discourse of the West and the Rest where the Other stands for the less developed, less moral, and less human.

One of main issues with racialized discourses is that although racial hierarchy is commonly assumed to be obsolete in research discourse, Goldberg (1993) and Omi &

Winant (1993) warn that social racism and the expression of racialized discourses do not remain static or ahistorical. Transformation and alteration in racialized discourses and social racism both interact with social conditions, historical elements, and power structures that reformulate its racialized expression and social consequences (e.g. the dismantling of Affirmative Action and the counterpart discourse on reverse racism). In education, this is exemplified by the racialized discourse concerning minority groups that has transformed from culturally “deprived” and “disadvantaged” to “at risk” (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995).

In summary, the formation of modern research is permeated by epistemological racism because it is informed by a racialized discourse that at the most basic level differentiates among ethnic/racial groups. This is clearly exemplified by research studies that compare or describe differences among groups or that study cultural groups (such as those conducted in the field of anthropology). The *exclusionary differential* in racialized discourses determines the level of its racist preconception as it produces multiple violent/oppressive social practices at the individual, social, and institutional level. Hence, this study acknowledges that society has learned to be thoroughly racialized over the past five hundred years (Goldberg, 1993; Hall, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1993; Willinsky, 1998) and that race stands simultaneously as a social construction and a material reality in performative terms—that is “in terms of the effects of political struggles over social & economic exploitation, political disenfranchisement, and cultural and ideological repression” (Bhabha, 1992 cited in Mc Carthy & Chochlow, 1993, p. xxi).



Further, this study acknowledges that the issues of race and the racialized discourse are quite intricate, complex, and pervasive. For practical purposes, this study is mostly concerned with the racialized discourse that derives from the civilizational and institutional level (academia) where the concept of race exists and the structures of value, order, and classification all shape the racialized discourses of research. It is in between the hyphens (Fine, 1994) of the research discourse, that subterranean civilizational structures and “values enter into the selection of subjects of study, into the determination of content, into the identification of facts, into the assessment of evidence and the policy recommendations” (Forsythe, 1973, p. 216).

### **Patriarchy and Research**

In addition to racialized discourses and structures, concepts of patriarchy also intersect in the matrix of modern research in multiple and significant ways. For the past three decades, feminist scholarship (informed by liberal, radical, socialist, and womanism political ideologies) have attempted to challenge the patriarchal structures inherent across all social practices—government, family, education, religion, politics, and science (hooks, 2000). As an overarching concept, Cannella (1997) describes how patriarchy rests upon basic assumptions that are used against various peoples:

Males and females are essentially, biologically, and socially different. Because males are the strongest and most rational, they are naturally superior to females and designed as those who would be the political citizens. The male function is to explain, order, and control the world. The female function is nurturance and reproduction. Although both functions are essential to human survival, the male function transcends the material universe. The female function is more basic, as with children and more “savage” peoples (Cannella, 1997, p. 139).

According to Lerner (1993; 1986), patriarchal perspectives emerged before the construction of Western civilization, most likely long before rationalized discourses (cited in Cannella, 1997, p. 139). For instance, Aristotle's (1941) concepts of the *hierarchy of being* placed women in an inferior position—so that “the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind” (p. 1132) (cited in Cannella, 1997, p.139). Furthermore, Greek and Roman philosophical attitudes towards women defined the desired and undesired qualities of women as mothers, daughters, wives through multiple representational apparatuses (e.g. texts, paintings, sculptures) and social institutions (e.g. family, religion, or class systems) (Erler & Kowaleski, 1988, cited in Smith, 2002, p. 45-46).

In relation to research as a social practice, patriarchal perspectives have “consistently given priority to the values of white, middle class men who have been its practitioners” (Peplau & Conrad, 1989, p. 383). Moreover, not only has research privileged the white, middle class male perspective, but it has also established and normalized its position in fields such as developmental psychology where “the quintessential developing child is a boy” (Burman, 1994, p. 157). Consequently, patriarchal assumptions of gender and culture have constructed the identities and roles of women through childhood discourses that have been legitimized through developmental psychology (Burman, 1994) and educational research (Cannella, 1997). According to McHugh, Koeske, & Frieze (1986), “unexamined assumptions about the sexes and unequal treatment of males and females” may permeate research at any phase of the

project (p. 879). Moreover, patriarchal assumptions may not only lead to ignoring research issues important to women and differential treatment across gender, but most notably, research practices can fabricate and extend differences that are believed to be “natural, essential, or biological” (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 24). Hence, patriarchal structures create the Other (female) and become compounded by racialized discourses and its preconceptual elements (e.g. exclusion).

In conclusion, patriarchal structures intersect with the matrices of power/knowledge and history producing objects of knowledge through research discourses and other representational systems and social practices that render females and Others (e.g. children) as docile bodies to be defined, represented, and disciplined (Sawicki, 1991). Thus, research represents one of the multiple disciplinary technologies that produce modern individuals. Feminist scholarship and activism have challenged the foundations of research (e.g. Harding, 1987/1998; Nielsen, 1990), advocated nonsexist research practices (e.g. McHugh et al., 1986) and analyzed research studies along the lines of gender egalitarianism (e.g. Campbell & Schram, 1995, Dunn & Waller, 2000). A critical reflection of modern research considers its formations and structures (racial and patriarchal) in addition to its conceptual tools. The next section, Smith (2002) provides a broader social critique of modern research into what she refers to as the key sites of research (theory, writing, and history) that still colonize the Other.

### **Key Sites of Research**

According to Smith (2002), research critiques in the social sciences have mainly focused on the theories of knowledge (positivism, postmodern, etc.) that contest the

legitimation of each science paradigm. However, if research is discussed in relation to indigenous people or other subjugated groups, the critique of research stands as a much deeper and intricate predicament to contend with since it cannot be discussed outside European imperialism and the multifaceted and transforming forms of colonialism. As Smith (2002) quite poignantly states “the pursuit of knowledge is embedded in multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices” that contain a history and current research practices that “still offends the deepest sense of our humanity” (p. 1-2). Historically, the West’s pursuit of knowledge has degraded indigenous groups, for instance, through measurement devices that were employed to determine the faculties of those considered less human (Gould, 1996). This pursuit of knowledge has also appropriated the Other’s knowledge systems and technologies claiming them as its own while at the same time rejecting selectively the Other’s ways of knowing as inferior (Harding, 1998; Cobern & Loving, 2000; Smith, 2002). In addition, current research practices under globalization bring a “new wave of exploration, discovery, exploitation and appropriation” that extract “medicinal remedies,” “genes,” “intangibles” (e.g. belief systems or ideas about universe) or cultural materials (e.g. massage techniques) in a global scientific hunt for “new knowledges, new materials, new cures” (Smith, 2002, p. 24-25).

Further, the pursuit of knowledge has created an archive about the Other that is under the West’s classification/representational systems and theoretical conceptualizations. These systems are embedded in a communicative loop where the Other is created and contemplated by the West, then projected back to the colonized Other (Said, 1978 cited by Smith, 2002, p. 2). Notably, because European “perceptions

of the material superiority of their own cultures, particularly as manifested in scientific thought and technological innovation, shaped their attitudes toward and interaction with peoples they encountered overseas” those peoples have been placed in inferior positions within the configurations of superiority/inferiority structures (Adas, 1989, p.4). In sum, the Western pursuit of knowledge and its past and current research practices have been called into question especially by indigenous groups, minority groups, and women.

While critiques of research may focus on other important topics (e.g. improving tools of research or epistemological debates), Smith’s (2002) critique of research concentrates on the conceptual tools of research—theory, writing, and history—which have served to colonize the indigenous world.

Writing has been viewed as the mark of a superior civilization and other societies have been judged, by this view, to be incapable of thinking critically and objectively, or having distance from ideas and emotions. Writing is part of theorizing and writing is part of history. Writing, history, and theory, then, are the key sites in which Western research of the indigenous world have come together...Western academy which claims theory as thoroughly Western, which has constructed all the rules by which the indigenous world has been theorized, indigenous voices have been overwhelming silenced (Smith, 2002, p.29).

The Western academy and its regimes of knowledge (disciplines) are implicated in production of writing, the development/extension of theory, and the perpetuation of colonial structures that determine e.g. whose historical account is legitimate or what needs to be researched. Thus, these three key sites of Western research call forth the need to address the issues of self-determination, decolonization, and social justice among indigenous or minority communities. Indigenous and minority groups have the right to self-determination which includes the right to conceptualize, theorize, act on, and

represent their own contemporary existence in research discourses, history, and literature.

In turn, academic research writing is inherently implicated with *oppressive* theorizing as it operates on research methods that arrange, select, and present knowledge in various styles of discourse that are “never innocent” (Smith, 2002, p. 36)—that is, the conceptual tool of writing privileges what counts as significant and constructs “regimes of truth” that legitimate dominant scientific views (Foucault, 1972). Indeed, Clifford & Marcus (1986) position scientific writing as a set of literary procedures that code, encode, collect, classify, and order *facts*. Although scientific writing may not apply certain literary expressive modes (e.g. rhetoric), it is still a literary mode that entails a complex writing process that implicates the author/researcher as a co-constructer of reality. This is best exemplified by the politics of academic representation and interpretation that are crucial to indigenous and minority communities because they raise questions in regards to who is the writer/researcher, for whom is the author/researcher writing, and in what circumstances is the writing/research taking place (Said, 1983 cited in Smith, 2002, p. 37). However, the critique of academic writing and theory does not necessarily deny that academic research writing is important because indeed it “adds to, is generated from, creates or broadens our theoretical understandings” (Smith, 2002, p. 37). The main concern with theory and writing is that it must be critically analyzed and utilized—hence, the research process of setting priorities, choosing the research agendas, and designing research methods need to evolve from the self-determination/ decisions of indigenous and minority communities.

History is a key site of Western research not only because, as previously mentioned, it reveals modern research development within the Enlightenment/modern matrix and its relationship to imperialism/colonization, but because history itself is determined by the West's dominant perspective that recounts the Other's history and theorizes the Other's existence. Consequently, history brings forth the conceptual space and analytical practice of the decolonizing Western theory, knowledge and research practices. Decolonization does not imply total rejection of Western theory, knowledges, and research practices—rather, it implies a critical re-examination of the theories that inform them and the practices that produce *regimes of truth* (Foucault, 1972) and their respective discourses (van Dijk, 1993). Decolonization thus entails “centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” as part of minority/indigenous communities (Smith, 2002, p. 39). Smith (2002) also notes that decolonization also necessitates to fight back in order to protect the communities from the invasion by “academic, corporate and populist researchers” (p.39). Thus, the ultimate aim in problematizing the interaction of theory, academic writing, history, along with research methods and methodologies, is that it provides visibility to the process and struggle of decolonization, self-determination, and ways of knowing between the West and the Other.

### **Summary**

It is important to understand the multiple historical formations and influences that have shaped modern research. The Enlightenment movement influenced the rise of

the social sciences as well as its methods (e.g. categorization, classification, and the comparative framework) and other value structures (e.g. patriarchy). Most notably, race stands as one of the most profound structures of modern research that has produced transforming racialized discourses of difference. However, without the history of Western imperialism/colonization, the critiques of research remain incomplete. Smith's (2002) critique of the pursuit of knowledge as manifested by Western research brings to light the intellectual colonization of indigenous/minority groups by Western research that historically created the archive of the Other. It is within the context of colonization/imperialism that the issues of the decolonization of the social sciences, self-determination, and social justice emerge as some of the most critical challenges confronting Western research.

## **RESEARCHER AND RESEARCHED**

Qualitative and quantitative research with ethnic minority populations has been problematic (Padilla, & Lindholm, 1995; Stanfield, 1993; Sue, 1999). Assumptions about the acquisition and production of knowledge (research) based on Eurocentric paradigms have "frequently resulted in misguided interpretations" (Padilla & Lindholm, 1995, p. 97). In educational quantitative research, the most common features of the Eurocentric paradigm are that 1) it rest on a nomothetic, universal framework or monocultural perspective (Banks, 1993; Padilla & Lindholm 1995; Stanfield, 1993); 2) it is male oriented (Graham, 1992; Harding, 1987); 3) and it frequently employs a comparative approach (Azibo, 1988; Zuberi, 2001). Efforts to counteract bias have focused on both epistemological and methodological issues across various social science



disciplines—for instance, in psychology (e.g. Okasaki & Sue, 1995; Rogler, 1985; Rogler, Malgady, & Rodriguez, 1989; Thomas & Sillen, 1972) and education (e.g. Banks & McGee-Banks, 1995; Gordon, 1990; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Hopson, 1999; House, 1999; McCarthy & Chrichlow, 1993; McLoyd & Randolph, 1984; Mertens, 1998).

In addition to a critical examination of the structures that influence modern research and its relation to colonialism, it is equally important to continue to re-evaluate the relationship between the researcher(s) and researched since it is embedded within a power/culture/knowledge configuration. A reflection on this relationship raises the questions about 1) who should do research in ethnic minority communities and 2) if only ethnic minority researchers should conduct such research projects. Therefore, the concern for insider/outsider status of the researcher, which emerged in the 1970's in the fields of anthropology and sociology, remains as a key social and research issue—especially, now when participatory and empowerment research are the focus (Stanfield, 1994b).

Confusion these days in the heat of multicultural debates more often than not hinges on one very simple though disturbing concern—at least to some it is disturbing. It is the issue of insider/outsider ability to study the cultures, institutions, and communities of those under the microscope. It bothers many Whites these days to be told that there is a strong possibility that, due to their outsider status, they are not able to tap adequately into the cultural sites (institutions, communities, networks, and other social organizations) of people of color (Stanfield, 1994b, p. 167).

However, the ability to do research on ethnic groups does not only implicate white researchers. Non-white researchers also face other factors that inhibit the research process and production. For example, non-white researchers conducting minority

community research may experience resistance due to their professional status so that they are viewed also as outsiders (Baca-Zinn, 1979). Thus, on the one hand, the issue of the insider/outsider status of researchers has led to the broad practical concern of how to abridge the social distance between the researcher and the researched—which is reflected in the improvement of methods, for example, on methods on how to conduct interviews or do participant-observant research or if the methods are even relevant or appropriate. In addition, there are other issues and dilemmas among non-white researchers: 1) they have been trained by Western academies and within specific disciplinary methodologies; and 2) they are bound by the “discourse rules and knowledge-distribution rules established by the official professional communities” (Stanfield, 1994b, p.168). Therefore, some non-white researchers may find a disconnection between the demands of academic research/knowledge production and the realities they encounter in their communities (Smith, 2002).<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, even with these limitations, researchers at the *margins* have provided transformative possibilities that have challenged traditional research approaches (Banks, 2002).

Furthermore, the insider-outsider controversy that emerged in the 1970’s also brought forward other interconnected issues. For one, as previously mentioned, critical analysis questioned the qualification of white researchers to do research on ethnic minorities (Bridges, 1973; Moore, 1973). This predicament still resonates strongly among indigenous communities that critique the practice of “*white research, academic research or outsider research*” (Smith, 2002, p. 42). Thus, the question extends to

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<sup>8</sup>Some scholars such as Chicana feminists engage in more activist-research roles (Hurtado, 1998).

whether researchers have the right cross the boundaries of ethnicity, gender, or race and (re)present the Other through various representational devices (e.g. books, documentaries, journals, media, museums). For Smith (2002), the self-determination of indigenous communities to conduct research and represent themselves is at stake.

The controversy presented by the insider-outsider debate also critiqued research for “systematically (if unintentionally)” exploiting ethnic minority groups (Baca-Zinn, 1979, p. 211),

Exploitation exists whenever there is a markedly unequal change between two parties, and when this inequality is supported by a discrepancy in social power. In social research, subjects must give up some time, energy, and some trust, but in the typical case get almost nothing from the transition. As social scientist, we get grants, which pay for our salaries; the research thesis legitimates our professional status, then publications advance us along in income and rank, further widening the material and status gap between the subjects and ourselves (Blauner & Wellman, 1973, p. 316).

Thus, the relationship between researcher and the researched involves issues of social and institutional power that facilitate(d) various degrees of exploitation and victimization—e.g. the Tuskanee research projects, the identification of groups as pathological (Staples, 1976 cited in Baca-Zinn 1979, p.211), the reproduction of racist research discourses (van Dijk, 1993). It must be noted that although the establishment of Institutional Review Boards (1974) in the United States emerged as a safeguard against blatant exploitation and victimization of human research subjects (especially in the medical field) which contains federal legal mandates for participant consent, the inequality of the social relationship between the researched and the researched needs to be furthered examined. The main concern should not only be to ensure the human research subjects physical and psychological safety—it should include questions about

who benefits, in what ways, how ethnic minority groups can be protected from misrepresentation, and how to ensure rights for human subjects to participate in the decision-making and direction of research project (which is addressed to some extent through community representatives and advocates but not with the voices of the full range of research subjects).

Furthermore, the outsider-insider debate reflects how a researcher's autobiographical, cultural, ethnic, and historical context is embedded in the process of research and knowledge production (Stanfield, 1994a). Ethnicity is usually defined in relation to non-white, cultural group identification and membership, while the whiteness of researchers is often implicit under the broad topic of Eurocentricism. Nevertheless, whiteness as an ethnicity is tightly connected to the critique of Eurocentric science epistemologies for the reason that

- The cultural communities in which individuals are socialized are also epistemological communities that have shared beliefs, perspectives, and knowledge (Banks, 1995, cited in Banks, 2002, p. 8).
- Social sciences and historical research are influenced in complex ways by life experiences, values, personal biographies, and epistemological communities of researchers (Banks, 1995, cited in Banks, 2002, p. 8).
- Knowledge created by social scientists, historians, and public intellectuals reflects and perpetuates their epistemological communities, experiences, goals, and interests (Banks, 1995, cited in Banks, 2002, p. 8).
- How individual social scientists interpret their cultural experiences is mediated by the interaction of a complex set of status variables, such as gender, class, age, political affiliation, religion and region (Banks, 1995, cited in Banks, 2002, p. 8).

The question of whiteness brings forth other interrelated issues that deal with the politics of identity (e.g. the fear based claim of the decline of the white majority), the discourse of white skin privilege (e.g. unearned privileges based on skin color), whiteness as an

expression of terror and violence (that implicate present and historical acts), structural whiteness (e.g. school curriculum), and global discourses of whiteness (Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001).

Thus, the identification of *whiteness* among researchers may vary—although the question of whether some white researchers have even been challenged to think of their whiteness as part of a cultural group/ethnicity remains uncertain<sup>9</sup>. The issue of whiteness may be similar to the documented resistance and defensiveness of white teachers when introduced to critical whiteness studies (e.g. Gillespie, Ashbaugh, & DeFiore, 2002; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Sleeter, 1993; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Some may not recognize at all their *white* ethnicity, others may only equate it with a historical white supremacy (a social problem of the past) that embodies a collective memory of prejudice and discrimination—while others may not consider white ethnicity as an issue that affects the quality of their research (this is often referred to as a color blind approach). Still other more culturally responsive researchers may acknowledge their white skin privilege, their white ethnicity, and work consciously through the highly sensitive matters of personal, social, institutional, and civilizational racism that exist in research practices and knowledge production. It is quite worthy to point that there is a visibility of ethnicity and a pervasive invisibility of *whiteness* that entails an issue of choice—while minority researchers do not have the social choice to acknowledge their ethnic culture (given that society, history, media, etc. continually reflect racial/ethnic

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<sup>9</sup> Some scholars have documented the *revelation* of their own whiteness (e.g. Gillespie et al. 2002). At this point, I have not been able to find research that specifically examines the whiteness of researchers although there is literature on issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity in higher education.

differentiation), non-minority researchers have the choice whether to acknowledge and reflect on their dominant sociohistorical status or not.

Whiteness, ethnicity, and race relations are particularly sensitive matters not only for researchers but for those of us who live in a multiethnic nation. We live in a complex web of personal and collective histories, cultures, and ethnicities that interact with ideologies of nationness, politics, and identity which, in turn, are imbedded in power and social structures. It is critical to continually recognize that research is a social relationship that entails racialized discourse and structures as well as various degrees of social distance (e.i. from case studies to secondary data) that nevertheless involves the personal and community lives of the researched and researcher. Research is more than a debate about paradigms or methodological practices. Research is about respect, social equality, the right to self-determination, and justice. Part of this can only begin to be accomplished when researchers reflect on their personal, cultural, and historical collective selves and critically understand the formations of modern research.

### **DISCOURSES OF (MEXICAN) AMERICANS IN EDUCATION**

The history of the education of Chicanos provides an account of the long standing struggle for equal education and a just society. From a perspective that examines the elements of research discourses, the history of Chicano education offers an example of the research practices that constructed the Other mostly through the categorization and classification of a racialized comparative framework. The following sections will present some of the main historical and contemporary research discourses of (Mexican) American students. Although historical, social, economic, and political

trends (e.g. Americanization/Deculturalization movement<sup>10</sup>, immigration policies, Civil Rights Movement, War on Poverty) have shaped the educational experience of (Mexican) American students, these aspects will be briefly discussed. The terms Chicano, Mexican-American, Spanish-speaking, Limited English Proficient (LEP), and English Language Learners (ELL) will be interchangeably used due to the historical shifts in labels applied by the modern research discourses. This section will review the research discourses of segregation, intellectual ability, underprivileged/disadvantaged, and finally bilingualism as some of the key components in the education of (Mexican) Americans. They are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the research discourses Othering (Mexican) Americans. However, these constructs will provide a contextual frame for the general purpose of this study.

### **Segregation**

There is a dearth of educational literature or research that documents the experiences of Chicanos in schools during the first half of twentieth century. Scholars mainly focused on the Progressive movement (1880-1930) and the Americanization of European immigrants (Donato, 1997). Few articles can be found in the National Education Association journal that pertain to Mexican immigrants or (Mexican) Americans—that is until the 1930's when educational studies and historical documentation began to appear on this population (Laija & Ochoa, 1999). This coincides with the (Mexican) American population growth due to the immigration wave

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<sup>10</sup> The Americanization movement of the early twentieth century is referred by Joel Spring (2000) as *Deculturalization*. I prefer this term since it seems more representative of the linguistic and cultural oppression experienced by minority groups.

of the 1920's (Samora, 1973). Nevertheless, the context of segregation sets the backdrop for the history of Chicano education.

During the first half of the twentieth century, most (Mexican) American students experienced segregation. Students were either placed in "Mexican classrooms" or "into entirely separate 'Mexican schools'" where "state officials reasoned that Mexican children needed to correct cultural and linguistic deficiencies before mixing with their 'American' peers" (Donato, 1997, p. 12-13). In contrast to the segregation experienced by African-Americans based on *race*, the segregation for (Mexican) American students became based on ethnicity. In fact, by 1930, Gonzalez (1974) found that eighty-five percent of (Mexican) American children in surveyed school districts in the Southwest attended segregated schools or classrooms (cited in Donato, 1997, p. 125). By the 1920s and 1930's the segregation of (Mexican) American children became a hot topic and scholars and students of education considered the limits and possibilities of school segregation for these children. One perspective supported segregation based on the issue of language differences. The public schools were ill equipped to provide an adequate instruction for (Mexican) American children who did not speak English (Donato, 1997). Another perspective in support of school segregation argued that limited-or non English speakers impeded the academic progress of Anglo children (Valencia, Menchaca, & Donato, 2002). Furthermore, some liberal educators supported segregation out of the concern that (Mexican) American students could experience damaging psychological effects if they were integrated in English classrooms and were expected to compete in English with their Anglo peers—"as true believers, liberal teachers were convinced that



ethnic integration created negative classroom environments and that it discouraged Mexican youth from staying in schools” (Donato, 1997, p. 14). Interestingly, this early perspective which considered segregation beneficial for (Mexican) American student psychological well being is later replicated in research studies that examined the relationship between self-concept and school achievement, and typically *found* (Mexican) Americans held a negative self-concept (e.g. Carter, 1970). In sum, language and cultural differences stood for limitation and deficiency and served as legitimate reasons to support racial school segregation.

From a social perspective, the segregation of (Mexican) American students emerged from racial and class motivated discrimination (Mendolia, 1993). Although some considered (Mexican) American children to be an entirely different racial group, the legacy of *mestizaje* confounded racial categories. For example, in California, (Mexican) Americans were classified as Caucasians but in 1935 there was a successful legal action that reclassified them under the *Indian* racial status in order to legally segregate this population (Valencia et al., 2002a). Nevertheless, at the national level since segregation of (Mexican) American children did not become based on constitutional or statutory grounds, the separation of students became established on school board and administrative regulations (San Miguel, 1987). To a significant degree, the separation of school facilities established by local school boards simply reflected the Anglo population racist and anti- integration sentiments. The Anglo population “did not want Mexican students to attend school with Anglo children regardless of their social standing, economic status, language capability, or place of

residence”—they were perceived to be socially and economically inferior as well as having lower standards of cleanliness (San Miguel, 1987, p. 55).

In a study conducted by Reynolds (1933) across the five Southwestern states on the education of *Spanish-speaking* children, it was reported that not only were these children segregated, but in addition,

The problem of location and adequacy in type and number of school buildings and rooms for Mexican pupils is complicated by the fact that prejudice has existed and continues to exist (probably to a lesser extend now than formerly) on the part of many Americans parents against sending their children to schools attended by Mexican American children (p. 9).

Unsurprisingly, as the school segregation discourse continued, research about the (Mexican) American morality, temperament, hygiene, and virtues merged with educational research to confirm a constructed *inferiority* supporting segregation practices and policies. “Numerous studies” supported or advocated segregation because (Mexican) Americans were considered “dishonest, immoral, and violent” (Donato, 1997, p. 16). For instance, a study noted that Americans “familiar” with the (Mexicans) Americans characterized them with “irresponsibility, imitateness, thriftlessness, sex-consciousness, individualism, and procrastination as being among the ones which hold them on the low plane at which most of them in the United States exist”—thus these prejudiced Americans did not recommend the mixing of whites and (Mexican) Americans in schools (Maguire, 1938 cited Donato, 1997, p. 16).

The Americanization/*Deculturalization* programs aimed toward European immigrants and other ethnic minorities followed a contradictory development in relation to (Mexican) Americans students. While it was expected for European immigrants to

assimilate into the Anglo-Saxon concepts of law, order, government through formal schooling by learning English and new modes of behavior and political ideology, (Mexican) Americans “were looked upon as outsiders who would never blend into the mainstream” (Donato, 1997, p. 18). Furthermore, Americanization (*Deculturalization*) programs also (re)produced other forms of school segregation. According to Gonzalez (1990), Americanization programs found in the Southwest mostly emphasized language instruction and a curriculum that tracked students into vocational training geared toward manual labor. Furthermore, in Texas for example, numerous curricular materials were published by the State Department of Education in the 1920’s and 1930’s on how to teach non-English speaking children—resulting on an emphasis on learning English oral skills rather than subject matter (San Miguel, 1987). Hence, segregationist and Americanization agendas seemed to mutually support the curricular tracking of (Mexican) Americans into a less than equal and adequate education.

In addition, Americanization scholars warned policymakers and educational reformers that the increasing *Spanish-speaking* population presented a grave educational problem because of their lack of ambition for education and their immoral character (Donato, 1997). And this type of discourse was clearly held by educators such as this principle in Phoenix, Arizona,

Much more classroom time should be spent teaching the [Mexican] children clean habits and positive attitudes towards others, public property, and their community in general...[The Mexican child] can be taught to repeat the Constitution forward and backward and still he will steal cars, break windows, wreck public recreational centers, etc., if he doesn’t catch the idea of respect for human values and personalities (Weinberg, 1977 cited in Gonzalez, 1990, p. 37).

Therefore, differential educational aspirations between white Americans and (Mexican) Americans became inscribed in the educational discourse—with the (Mexican) American characterized by indifference toward formal education. The following excerpt also exemplifies how the (Mexican) American community came to be depicted in educational discourses,

[c]ulture has been geared to an agricultural tempo, and the conflict between rural and urban values is part of the problem. A number of studies are available that point out the fact the educational status of the Mexican is low because of poor school attendance, limited average grade completion, and frequent school failures. Some of this low educational status may be explained in terms of high mobility necessitated as transient workers, difficulties centering upon bilingualism, and perhaps a culture that values 'living': rather than schooling (McDonaugh, 1949, cited in Donato, 1997, p. 18-19).

It is worth noting that while the Southwest economy relied heavily on agriculture and depended on (Mexican) American labor, a significant portion of the (Mexican) Americans resided in urban areas (Romo, 1979, cited in Donato 1997, p. 29). After the Second World War, there was a massive rural-urban influx of (Mexican) Americans (Carter, 1979). Therefore, the poor attendance or educational aspirations of (Mexican) Americans in schools could not be explained only within the context of the migrant (Mexican) American community. Nevertheless, the depiction of the migrant (Mexican) American family concealed social and educational inequalities. Although the (Mexican) American migrant family benefited the U.S. agricultural economy, the rural context had detrimental effects on the schooling of migrant (Mexican) American children. The schooling of migrant children was either completely denied or limited (shortening school days)—thus, “Mexican children in the Southwest were not being served equally to whites because of indifference, because local economies depended on

their labor, and because they were ethnically distinct” (Donato, 1997, p. 30). In fact, few studies in the early century such as those by Little (1944), Manuel (1930), Reynolds (1933), Sanchez (1934; 1951) actually documented the inadequate schooling conditions of (Mexican) Americans as alternative standpoints for the undereducation among the Chicano population (cited in Cortès, 1974).

Contrary to the myth that (Mexican) American did not value education, the desegregation litigation brought forth by (Mexican) Americans since the early twentieth century disproves such a common misconception (San Miguel, 1987). In fact, the first successful desegregation case in the United States, *Alvarez v. Lemon Grove* (1931) ruled in favor of the (Mexican) American community on the grounds that separate facilities were not conducive to the Americanization and English language learning of (Mexican) American students (Donato, 1997). Similarly, during the pre- and post-*Brown* (1954) era, other cases such as the *Independent School District v. Salvatierra* (1930, 1931), the *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946, 1947), or the *Cisneros vs. Corpus Christi Independent School District* (1970) illustrate the activism of (Mexican) American communities towards the equal education (Valencia et al., 2002a). Furthermore, the re-segregation of (Mexican) American students continues to be a significant educational trend complicated by language issues (e.g. the provision of bilingual education) and academic segregation (e.g. ability grouping or vocational tracking) (Valencia et al., 2002a). In addition to discriminatory practices, inferior/inadequate schooling (e.g. overcrowded schools, lack of financial funds, educational materials, technology, or qualified teaching force) continues to represent an old yet newly transformed problem related to the present re-

segregation of (Mexican) Americans (Valencia et al., 2002a). In brief, segregation is a highly relevant and complex social and educational issue that has adversely affected (Mexican) American students' access to quality and equal educational opportunities. Therefore, it was important for this study to examine how research discourse addressed issues of educational access and opportunities as well as the educational conditions of (Mexican) American students.

### **Intellectual Ability**

The practices of segregation were in part justified by the scientific rationale in the advent of mass IQ testing and the institutionalization of testing practices in education (Valencia, Villarreal, & Salinas, 2002). Intelligence testing has a long and controversial history that originally centered on the nature versus nurture debate. Regardless of whether the early proponents of intelligence testing adhered to hereditary or environmental perspectives, in reality both perspectives stemmed from an Enlightenment/modern scientific viewpoint that held the fallacy of reification—the “tendency to convert the abstract concepts into entities” so that the physical location and measurement of mentality became the brain (Gould, 1996, p. 56). Moreover, underneath the historical layers of psychometric measurement, lay another fundamental Enlightenment/modern belief that “understanding is akin to measuring” (Smith, 2002, p. 42). Thus, intelligence is a social construct that historically has been reduced to mathematical formulas that fundamentally argues from a nature versus nurture philosophical framework.

In the early history of intelligence testing, the social value of IQ testing consisted in the belief that it had the ability to bring “ten of thousands of these high grade defectives under the surveillance and protection of society” and that it could potentially help to decrease the “reproduction of feeble-mindedness and [would aid] in the elimination of an enormous amount of crime, pauperism, and industrial inefficiency” (Terman, 1916, cited in Donato, 1997, p. 24). Indeed, the intelligence testing movement was implicated in racist political and social theories (e.g. the eugenics movement) that aimed to *advance* social organization, the production of labor, and the bio-evolution of society (Gonzalez, 1990). Hence, hundreds of comparative racial studies were conducted in the United States, creating racial hierarchies and claiming the superiority of the mythical white, middle class Anglo child. Needless to say, social scientists were also white, middle/upper class males who did not represent the interest of the *scientifically proven inferior* ethnic minority groups (Gonzalez, 1990).

Despite the eugenic foundations of intelligence testing, educational reformers in the United States readily embraced this practice. Intelligence testing seemed to provide a *scientific method* to sort students into appropriate curriculum and vocational tracks (Gonzalez, 1990; Donato, 1997; Valencia et al., 2002a). The practice of intelligence testing has become an unquestionable and permanent social construct in the school system, playing a significant role in discriminatory school practices that group students into ability or vocational tracks (Gonzalez, 1990; Oakes, 1985; Rodriguez, 1999). In sum, during the first half of the twentieth century, the educational system found the

practice of IQ testing a compelling disciplinary apparatus that served to distinguish between the *feeble-minded* and those of *superior intelligence*.

According to Valencia (1997) analysis, between 1920-1929 there were eight studies published that had (Mexican) American children as subjects of research (Garretson, 1928; Garth, 1923; 1928; Goodenough, 1926; Koch and Simmons, 1926; Paschal and Sullivan, 1925; Sheldon, 1924; Young, 1922) (cited in Valencia et al. 2002a, p. 86). In all of these studies, the comparative research framework counted against (Mexican) children since they employed white normative data as the basis of comparison. The studies attributed the low performance in the IQ test to the heredity of (Mexican) American children explicitly or implicitly. For instance, Sheldon (1924) found that “Mexicans as a group possessed about 85 percent of the intelligence of a similar group of White children” (cited in Donato, 1997, p. 26). Garretson (1928) stated that not only were (Mexican) American children genetically inferior but those factors such as residence patterns, irregular school attendance, and linguistic differences contributed to their mental retardation (cited in Donato, 1997, p. 26). Interestingly, Garth (1923) conducted a comparative intelligence study between *biracial* Native Americans, Mexicans, and other *full-blooded* Native Americans and ranked them accordingly, placing the Mexicans second to the biracial Native Americans—demonstrating that the Native Americans disproved “innate racial differences in intelligence...[but that]...differences in opportunity and in mental attitude toward the white man’s of thinking and living are apparent” (cited in Donato, 1997, p. 26). Although genetic superiority had been disproved by this study, it is interesting that Garth



(1923) still adhered to racial superiority of whites. In sum, between 1915 and 1950, studies that measured (Mexican) American children's intelligence and their educational achievement consistently *found* that they scored lower on the norm referenced tests or in comparative studies using the standard of average Anglo population (Gonzalez, 1990). According to Donato (1997), some psychometricians either discounted language as a relevant issue in IQ testing (e.g. Paschal & Sullivan, 1925; Haught, 1931) others considered language to be an important factor so they attempted to construct a language-free intelligence measures (e.g. Goodenough, 1928)<sup>11</sup>. In sum, while racial superiority framed the research findings and attributed the *failure* of Chicanos to inferior intellectual heredity, others contributed the low IQ performance on environmental, cultural, or language factors—thus, the source for the undereducation of Chicanos was located within the individual or the cultural environment.

The measurement of cognitive abilities in our contemporary time has left for the most part the vestiges of explicit racist interpretations, however, the controversy of intelligence measurement on (Mexican) Americans and other ethnic minorities has continued. Over the last three decades, the debate has taken on different levels —e.g. psychometrically and/or legally as in the case of special education. According to a literature review conducted by Valencia et al. (2002b), there was a significant amount of research studies that examined the cultural test bias of individual and group intelligence tests among ethnic minorities. The notion of test bias originally derived from a statistical term that referred to “a systematic under-or overestimation of a population

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<sup>11</sup> For a brief discussion of the arguments see Donato (1997), pp. 23-29.

parameter by a statistic based on samples drawn from the population” (Jensen, 1980, cited in Valencia et al., 2002b, p.262). The literature analyzed research documents that were based on *scientific criteria* (empirical, testable, and quantifiable) and determined if intelligence testing penalized minority groups. According to this literature study, research on cultural test bias emerged in the mid-1970, peaked in the late 1980’s, and subsided by the early 1990’s. One perspective offered by researchers that did not support intelligence testing on minorities, relied on the theory of validity to explain the test bias inherent in the structures of intelligence tests. Other researchers supporting intelligence measurement took on a different perspective and distinguished validity from statistical bias, contesting that based on empirical data, intelligence measures were not biased against racial/ethnic minority students—but that what was observed was a systematic (as opposed to random) error “of some true value of test scores that are connected to group membership” (Jensen, 1980, cited in Valencia et al., 2002b, p. 262). The group membership referred to a general categorization based on sex, social class, age, or race/ethnicity. Thus, the latter perspective argued that cultural test bias (based on racial/ethnic grouping) of intelligence measures can only be analyzed from a comparative research approach while the validity of the test was an entirely different statistical matter that only by default could apply to a single population sample. While both of these research perspectives based their arguments on *scientific* grounds (psychometric issues), a third approach to the critique of test bias was found among the studies analyzed. This approach focused on a broader social issue—the test unfairness—that is the use of test results by schools. This perspective contextualized the

detrimental educational implications of the use of intelligence testing. In sum, this literature study by Valencia et al. (2002b) provides a review as well as an example of how intelligence measurement continues to be an important educational issue and discourse among the research community. The following segment also provides an overview of the issue of test unfairness in relation to special education demonstrating the complexity of cultural bias in the use of intelligence testing in schools.

The educational practice and research on the intelligence testing of (Mexican) Americans demonstrates a history of over-representation in special education<sup>12</sup> and under-representation in gifted education (Valencia et al., 2002b). For instance, Mercer's (1973) documented the unfair practices in the assessment system that disproportionately identified and placed (Mexican) Americans students in special education classrooms for mild mental retardation. Two key legal cases in the 1970's challenged the bias in the assessment practices affecting minority students. The *Diana v. State Board of Education* (1970) and the *Larry P. v. Riles* (1979) cases respectively focused on the biased testing practices of individual intelligent testing due to language and cultural differences (Rueda, Artiles, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002). By the early 1980's, a panel directed by the National Academy of Sciences reconfirmed earlier findings—minority students were overrepresented in special educational classes for the mentally retarded (EMR), the trainable mentally retarded (TMR), and the emotionally disturbed (Rueda et al., 2002). During the same time period, the federal government also funded research projects conducted by the Handicapped Minority Research Institutes in California and

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<sup>12</sup> The issue of gifted education or the deconstruction of special education will not be discussed in this section. For an example of the deconstruction of special education see Sktic (1995).

Texas in order to analyze the assessment and instructional practices in special education that affected the Latino school population. Among the findings, it was reported that 1) “children of foreign-born Latino parents had a higher chance to be identified as disabled;” 2) “low achievement, poor reading and oral skills, articulation mistakes, limited vocabulary, and poor English comprehension were common referral and eligibility reasons;” 3) “44 percent of Latinos receiving special education services had been unofficially placed as modification of their regular program;” and 4) “diagnostic tests in English or Spanish were not valid for Latino bilingual learners” (Ruedas et al., 2002, p. 313). By the mid 1980s, some minor shifts occurred in regards to the prevalence of Latino students in special education. A study, for example, by Forness & Kavale (1989) reported a decrease in the EMR category from 1976-1977 to 1985-1986—but at the same time other studies (e.g. Ortiz & Yates, 1983; Figueroa et al., 1984) reported an increase of students identified under the categories of specific learning disabilities (SLDs) overrepresented by Latino students (cited in Rueda et al., 2002, p. 313-314). The contradictions of the research findings are not surprising given that there are multiple factors that take place in the assessment process. What is relevant in this section is that the research demonstrates that assessment practices continue to negatively affect the Latino student population and that one of the most visible effects is the overrepresentation of minorities in special education.

In conclusion, the significance of intelligence testing research and the educational practices such as the misplacement of special education students is that it demonstrates a historical interplay of the politics of difference between educational

structures (e.g. assessment systems and testing instruments), social relationships (e.g. the role of white teachers and minority children) legal systems (e.g. federal special education mandates) and cultural factors (e.g. language). The next section provides a discussion of the cultural factors found in the research discourses on (Mexican) Americans. From a historical framework analyzing the research formations constructing the discourse of (Mexican) American education, one of the key research discourses explored is the research perspectives on the *educability* and expectations of (Mexican) American students by the educational system.

### **Underprivileged/Disadvantaged**

Carter (1970) conducted an educational study that confirmed that most educators adhered to a cultural deprivation perspective to explain the school failure of (Mexican) Americans. He found that by the 1960s, the literature on (Mexican) American education usually consisted of five research trends —the measurement of achievement and years of schooling; the correlation of socioeconomic factors to achievement and years of schooling; the explanatory (of the conditions associated with *school failure*); papers supporting special educational programs; and lastly those that focused on curricular materials. For that reason, the concept *school failure* came to represent both a low academic achievement and early school withdrawal. The educational explanatory literature typically ascribed (Mexican) American school failure to factors within the home culture. The ascribed connection between low achievement, socioeconomic status, and home culture will be more thoroughly discussed in the following sections. Interestingly, despite the fact that the correlation between low achievement of (Mexican)

Americans and low socioeconomic status had been generally recognized, it was not until publications and subsequent data analysis from the United States Census 1950 (especially the United States Census of the 1960) that “specific information concerning the disadvantaged status of the group was widely disseminated” (Carter, 1970, p. 32). Concurrently, many research studies concentrated on the poverty, home characteristics, and life-styles of ethnic minorities co-constructing the discourse of underprivileged/disadvantaged cultures.

The concept of underprivileged and disadvantaged to a significant degree related to a racialized theory of cultural deprivation. This theory also referred to as *the culture of poverty theory* became a dominant framework in educational psychology shifting the discourse from genetic inferiority to environmental determinism (Garcia & Wiese, 2002). One of the premises underlying the cultural deprivation theory was the idea that certain cultures did not impart the necessary skills and experiential base for children to succeed in schools (Carter, 1970). Several sample definitions provided by Carter (1970) demonstrate the subtractive aspect underlying the concept of cultural deprivation—the disadvantaged “is anyone who cannot participate in the dominant culture” or is “one who is handicapped in the task of growing up to live a competent and satisfying life in American society” or is “a child who has difficulty achieving in school because of his background” (p. 36). Evidently, the assumption framing the concept of cultural deprivation consisted of a generalized description of a white, middle class culture from which other presumably monolithic cultures were found deficient. As a corollary, the school primary function became to remedy, change, or eradicate the “lacks” of the

disadvantaged child— “by implication, those failings of home and neighborhood socialization” (Carter, 1970, p. 37). A list of the failings from the home culture became simply framed by the notion of “lack of educational tradition” which included “few books... poor health, improper diet, frequent moving, and noisy, TV-ridden homes” in addition to “inadequate motivation to pursue a long-range educational career...antagonism toward the school, the teacher” and “insufficient language and reading skills” (Reissman, 1962, cited in Carter, 1970, p. 37). Thus, as research correlated low socioeconomic status of (Mexican) American children and other ethnic minorities to low academic achievement and compensatory programs (e.g. under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) emerged to alleviate the effects of poverty—the underlying ideology of cultural deprivation sustained both research and educational practices.

It is not inappropriate that the programs of special education for the disadvantaged have been described as compensatory. They are attempts to compensate for, to overcome, the effects of hostile, different, or indifferent backgrounds. Their aim is to bring children from these backgrounds up to a level where they can be reached by existing educational practices and it is in terms of this aim that we tend to judge their success or lack of it... The unexpressed purpose of most compensatory programs is to make disadvantaged children as much as possible like the kinds of children with whom the school has been [or perceives itself as] successful, and our standard of educational success is how well they approximate middle-class children in school performance (Gordon & Wilkerson, 1966, cited in Carter, 1979, p. 259).

Carter (1979) referred to these remedial and compensatory programs as the “adjust-the child approaches” whose underlying purpose was to modify the (Mexican) American “real” economic or “assumed” cultural deficiencies (p.259).

Historically, the inference created between low socioeconomic status and cultural deficiency (e.g. hygiene, morality, virtue) began to develop during the mid-eighteenth century and formalized by the twentieth century when the social construction of childhood and the fears of urban disorder (e.g. youth delinquency, spread of disease, civil insurrection) that were mostly associated with immigrants and African Americans, led to the discourse and practice of *child saving* movements (Wollons, 1993). The language of risk proliferated and merged in the legal juvenile system, the governmental agencies, child advocacy organizations, and the schools by the twentieth century (Cravens, 1993). These social institutions co-produced the “discovery” as well as definition of these *risks* while at the same time created the correctives (prevention and intervention programs) for children that paradoxically needed protection but threatened or “disturb[ed] the social order” (Wollons, 1993, p. ix). Labels identifying these “risks” and masking social complexity as well as educational inequality circulated in the research and educational discourse. During first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, (Mexican) Americans were referred by educational system simply as the “Mexican Problem” (e.g. Reynolds, 1933) by the mid-century as the “disadvantaged” (e.g. Carter 1970/1979) and at the end of the century “at risk” (e.g. Barona & Garcia, 1990). Although these linguistic descriptors are contingent upon historical, social, and educational factors that provide variation and contextualize their cultural meaning, they nevertheless center(ed) upon issues of poverty, minority status, and the low achievement of (Mexican) Americans in education.



In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that socioeconomic factors do affect societies and people in multiple ways. The reality of poverty/low-income that interacts with race and class issues cannot be dismissed, ignored, or minimized because poverty has real and personal consequences (e.g. lack of access to adequate health care or higher education). Moreover, research *findings* consistently show a correlation between socioeconomic factors and the educational outcomes of (Mexican) Americans and other minority groups. However, there is a substantial difference between ascribing the “underprivileged or “disadvantaged” or “at risk” status in research discourses to socio-economic factors versus cultural deprivation. The distinction has historically been blurred by the persistent racist and assimilationist perspectives that have defined language and cultural differences as a deviant or deficient. In reality, this type of discourse extends from an imperialistic and colonizing framework that shapes U.S. race relations—and consequently research discourses. Thus, there is a distinction in stating a correlation (poverty and educational outcomes) and the interpretation that continues to place blame of the educational outcomes to the home environment and language diversity. The next section explores another cultural factor, the issue of the bilingualism, adding another dimension to the complexity to the history and educational research discourses of (Mexican) Americans.

### **Bilingualism**

Bilingualism is both a major historical and contemporary topic in the education of (Mexican) Americans. The controversy of bilingualism is set within three interrelated issues. The first issue entails the examination of the social and political status of native

languages and the push for an only English. The second issue includes the relationships constructed by research between bilingualism and cognitive development and between academic achievement and monolingual native speakers. The third major issue deals with the controversy surrounding the effectiveness of bilingual education. The sociopolitical status of native language is recognized as the most critical issue since it contextualizes the research on bilingualism and the bilingual education debates. It is also the most sensitive issue given that historically there has been a devaluation/oppression of the Spanish language reflected in the institutionalization of “No Spanish” rules and the belief that it was “un-American” (Bernal, 1999, p. 80). However, only an overview is provided for the last two major issues given that the historical, economic, and sociopolitical implications of linguistic rights is extensive.

For at least half a century the majority of the educational research adhered to the view that bilingualism represented a learning handicap, a detriment to cognitive development, and an obstacle to the education of (Mexican) Americans (Carter, 1970; 1979),

A large proportion of the investigators have concluded from their studies that bilingualism has detrimental effect on intellectual functioning. The bilingual child is described as being hampered in his performance on intellectual tests in comparison with the monolingual child. A smaller proportion of the investigators found little or no influence of bilingualism on intelligence in that no significant differences between bilinguals and monolingual on tests of intelligence was apparent” (Peal & Lambert, 1962 cited in Carter 1970, p. 49-50).

According to Zentella (2002), research on language code switching tended to be view this type of language as a form of cognitive confusion (e.g. Acosta-Belen, 1975). But Peal & Lambert (1962) *found* that early bilingual studies failed to distinguish between

pseudobilinguals and truly bilingual children; thus, their study was a turning point in the field of educational research by recognizing bilingualism as asset rather than an educational handicap (cited in Diaz, 1990, p. 93). Consequently, their work led to two research paradigms: 1) comparative studies of monolinguals and balanced bilinguals, and 2) within-bilingual design studies that examine the effects of the varying degrees of second language proficiency. Cummins (1981) and Thomas & Collier (1997) longitudinal studies on the bilingualism and school achievement, exemplify the most well known research studies that have emerged from these paradigms. Research studies over the last three decades have consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between bilingualism and cognitive gains in e.g. concept formation, creativity, and metalinguistic awareness (Diaz, 1990). Therefore, more recent cognitive research on bilingualism contradicts early research findings that considered bilingualism to be detrimental to cognitive development.

Nevertheless, numerous studies in the past have found a strong relationship between Spanish as the primary language at home and low academic achievement of Hispanics (Carter, 1970). For example, a study conducted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1975) concluded that the lack of English language skills was the main reason for the failure of Chicano students (cited in Gandara, 1993, p.139). However, these findings were contradicted by other studies (e.g. Kimball, 1968; Lugo, 1970) conducted on Mexican immigrant students that found no relationship between home language and academic achievement (cited in Gandara 1993, p. 139). Also, other research studies have *found* that there is a differential academic achievement between

foreign-and native born (Mexican) Americans—showing a relative underachievement of the U.S. born (Mexican) Americans in comparison to later generations of (Mexican) Americans (e.g. Buriel, 1987; Buriel & Cardoza, 1988; Valenzuela, 1999). Ogbu (1987; 1991) and Matute-Bianchi (1986) have also *found* that there is variability in academic achievement among first- second- and third generation minority students. Ogbu's (1991) research differentiated between the perceptions and coping strategies of immigrant and involuntary minorities toward formal education and Matute-Bianchi (1986) researched the differences among ethnic identities in relation to patterns of school. Both research studies contextualized educational outcomes (achievement) in relation to exclusionary and discriminatory forces experienced by minorities within dominant social structures. These key studies showed that school success/failure cannot be simply attributed to the lack of English skills and that historical racism, institutional oppression, and the dynamics of generational status (e.g. resistance/opposition to deculturalization and assimilation/acculturation) influence academic outcomes. Thus, addressing the issue bilingualism/language differences as a factor in the education of (Mexican) Americans is necessary but it is not sufficient—other historical and sociopolitical factors need to be considered in research and educational practice. Furthermore, the contradictory research reflects the limits of social science research—it cannot possibly reflect the complexity of issues in the education of (Mexican) Americans.

The third issue under the broad umbrella of bilingualism is the bilingual education debates. The controversy of bilingual education came to national attention

when the Mexican American Education Study (MAES) conducted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1972) found that few students were provided with bilingual education in the Southwest states, despite the fact that about one in two first graders needed such educational services due to their Spanish home/native language (cited in Valencia, 2002, p. 8). Similar to the research findings on bilingualism and its correlation to academic achievement, research on the effectiveness of bilingual programs holds opposing views. For instance, Cziko (1992) conducted a review on seven key bilingual program evaluation projects (Zappert & Cruz, 1977; Troike, 1978; American Institutes for Research, 1978; Baker & Kanter, 1981; Willig, 1985; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, Pasta, 1990) confirming the diversity of both findings and interpretations on the effectiveness of bilingual programs (it must be noted that these studies mostly compared monolingual programs and transitional bilingual programs). Similarly, Guerrero (2002) reviewed and critiqued five major bilingual education research studies conducted over the past ten years (Ramirez et al., 1991; Rossell and Baker, 1996; Greene, 1997; Thomas and Collier, 1997; Salazar, 1998) concluding that these studies (except for one) provided strong evidence that supported bilingual programs that offered a two-way and or late-exit approach. According to Guerrero (2002) the main focus of bilingual program evaluations is to determine if native language instruction enables both second language acquisition (English) and academic achievement so to inform educational policy. However, he points out that a significant amount of research on bilingual program effectiveness in the past has been limited by short-term research efforts. Thomas and Collier (1997) also critique short-

term research studies (e.g. 1-4 years in grades K-3) because they lead to inaccurate long-term sustainable gains in the education of language minority children. Research on the effectiveness of bilingual programs similar to other educational program evaluations have methodological constraints (e.g. sample size and controlling for student mobility); nevertheless, Guerrero (2002) notes that it is critical that bilingual program evaluations specifically define the features of the instructional program rather than the program label (e.g. pull out ESL, dual two-way, transitional). In conclusion, bilingual education as an alternative to the education of English language learners (ELL) has been researched for the past three decades based on quantitative/empirical methods that over the last decade provide support for the effectiveness of bilingual education (Guerrero, 2002). However, as the controversy is fueled by political agendas that have resulted in California's Proposition 227 and Arizona's Proposition 203, which seemed to have disregarded empirical data, the controversy over bilingual education actually stands beyond the issue of effectiveness (Guerrero, 2002). Bilingualism in the education of (Mexican) Americans similar to those other global minority groups necessitates a broader social and political context that addresses linguistic and educational rights (Spring, 2001).

### **Summary**

The Americanization/*Deculturalization* programs geared toward (Mexican) Americans occurred within a segregated educational system in both rural and urban settings (Gonzalez, 1990). The research discourses for the first seven decades of the century ascribed an inferior model to (Mexican) Americans that shifted from intellectual deficiency to cultural depravation (Blanton, 2003) and created a myth of educational

apathy. In contrast to conventional wisdom that portrays (Mexican) Americans indifferent and apathetic towards education, the litigation against segregation brought forth by the (Mexican) American community proves otherwise (San Miguel, 1987). Language and cultural differences remain more of a socio-political issue rather than a topic of educational effectiveness given the deep colonial relationship and attitudes that permeate social relations in the United States. Research on bilingual students, bilingualism, or bilingual education appear inconsistent due to the diverse methodological approaches (e.g. longitudinal vs. short term research projects, pseudo-bilinguals vs. balanced bilingual research subjects, etc.) different research foci (e.g. cognitive skills, underachievement, anthropological, program evaluation, etc.) and the researchers' autobiographical, cultural, ethnic, and historical context (e.g. belief in racial hierarchies or socio-political inclinations). Educational research discourses about (Mexican) Americans, especially the early research on intelligence testing, have Enlightenment/modernist assumptions about measurement, racial hierarchy, and comparative frameworks—co-constructing the Otherness of (Mexican) Americans. This concept of Otherness as postulated by postcolonial theory is discussed in the following section in order to connect the how modern research, as part of a system of knowledge production, exist within a relationship of power, knowledge, and culture.

## **POSTCOLONIAL THEORIZING**

This section on postcolonial theorizing first makes an attempt to provide a general overview about postcolonial critique, theory, and methodology. It is an attempt in that 1) the nature of postcolonial studies is rather extensive, multidisciplinary and

Tricontinental; 2) as any other field of knowledge/practice, it is in process and transforming; and 3) only what is deemed relevant for this study is included. Therefore, this section includes a discussion about subjectivity and the postcolonial subject as represented by (Mexican) Americans. Next, the concept of Otherness is discussed and then exemplified by the colonial discourse on *Orientalism* (1978). An understanding of the concept of Otherness and discourse analysis is critical because it provides the theoretical foundations for the methodology in the study of (Mexican) American educational research and discourse.

### **Postcolonial Critique and Theory**

Anti-colonial/Tricontinental critique existed prior to the emergence of postcolonial studies. For instance, Bartolomè de las Casas wrote *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542) advocating human rights for the Indigenous groups under the Spanish Empire (cited in Young 2001, p. 75). Caribbean “negritude” writers and other Tricontinental political intellectuals (e.g. Ghandi, Fanon, Cabral) also formed part of the anti-colonial resistance (Young, 2001). Thus from the origins of colonialism, anti-colonial resistance existed and continued most notably in Marx and Egel’s critique of economic and political domination (Williams& Chrisman,1994). The history of postcolonial studies as an academic area, however, begins from two interrelated contexts: the political decolonization that took place during the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and from the intellectual revolution of the 1960’s -1970’s within Western academic traditions. Structuralist and post-structuralist movements challenged dominant conceptualizations of race, culture, class, and language, thus decentering



patriarchal, white Western systems of knowledge (Loomba, 1998). In turn, these intellectual movements opened the door to alternative theoretical and analytic approaches that differentiated postcolonial studies from anti-colonial critique and gave postcolonial studies its theoretical foundations (Binns, 2000). By the early 1980's Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978), increased the currency of postcolonial studies and for the past two decades postcolonial studies has emerged as a critical practice of inquiry.

In its current academic context, the concept of postcolonialism is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary undertaking that has multiple analytic approaches that delineate without restraining postcolonial critique. Postcolonialism examines the impact of colonial power structures that are pervasive in the economic, cultural, social, political, and the intellectual spheres of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In addition, postcolonial studies draws from different academic areas such as sociology (e.g. globalization) and history (e.g. subaltern studies), but primarily from the English departments and advanced cultural and critical theory. Depending on the theorist's location, various analytical "lenses" are utilized: e.g. neo-Marxist critique of ideology, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, feminism, or postmodernism. Some of the central concepts in that postcolonial theory include—the role played by various forms of representation and otherness (e.g. Said, 1978), nationality and identity (e.g. Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1965; Nandy, 1988), transnational hybridity of cultures and peoples (e.g. Bhabha, 1994), marginalization/subaltern voice and the re-evaluation of history (e.g.

Guha, 1982; Spivak, 1988), and resistance as oppositional or a process of mimicry (e.g. Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1967).

### **Locating the Term Postcolonial**

Although contested from differing academic locations, diverse forms of postcolonial theorizing converge with a focus on the impact and effects of colonialism/imperialism. The terms colonialism and imperialism are associated with historical and conceptual differentiation since the meanings have changed over time and the historical heterogeneity of colonization in the world history is extensive—nevertheless, in postcolonial theorizing both terms imply “forms of subjugation of one people by another” (Young, 2001, p. 15) through the direct/indirect military, economic, political, cultural domination of land and/or people including that of the mind of the colonized (Nandy, 1983). In addition, imperialism is generally considered to represent a form colonization associated with “the exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination” that involves “the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies” (Young, 2001, p. 27). In postcolonial theorizing both terms are used interchangeably but colonialism stands as the overarching referent to conquest, domination, and exploitation. However, the term (post/neo) colonial is a point of dissent because some postcolonial critics, to denote a temporal marker of the political decolonizing process, use the hyphenated term “post-colonial,” while others disagree with the chronological implication of colonization and instead use the term “postcolonialism” to signify the onset of colonial consequences beginning with

territorial occupation. Still, other theorists adhere to the term “postcoloniality” to distinguish the historical and material conditions from academic theory and its appropriation of the colonized experience (Gandhi, 1998). On the other hand, postcolonial critics like Gandhi (1998) propose a relationship between the term “postcolonialism” to stand for the theory or academic analysis and the term “postcoloniality” to describe the historical and present material conditions of the postcolonial nations/subjects within the decolonizing process. In the decolonizing process, the term postcolonialism rests on the ability to stand in the past, present, and future (Ghandi, 1998). It revisits, remembers, and interrogates the colonial past and its present colonial/modern structures while conceptualizing and strategizing the future (e.g. cultural restructuring of the postcolonial nation). Klor (1995) proposes that “postcoloniality” ought to “signify so not much subjectivity ‘after’ the colonial experience as the subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing discourses and practices” that is experienced by Latinos or “Latin American hybrids” in the United States (p. 245); thus, his conceptualization removes the dependency of the temporal and historical conditions of the term postcoloniality to a more adaptable application of the term postcolonial (Loomba, 1998). In sum, the term postcolonial may denote both a historical description of the world’s political nation-state independence and/or as an approach to the study of the economic, political and cultural effects bound by colonialism. This study uses the term postcolonialism to refer to the analysis of dominant cultural practices such as research.

## **Subjectivity and the Postcolonial Subject**

One of the main underlying theoretical concepts of postcolonial theory derives from the poststructural analysis of subjectivity. The Cartesian concept of the “I” as self-constituted, self-knowing, self-sufficient, autonomous, universal, and static is contested by postcolonial theory and other contemporary critical and postmodern theories. Instead, subjectivity is conceptualized as multiple, mutable, and most importantly constituted from the outside. Thus, the notion that subjectivity as constituted from the outside creates possible theoretical directions: a Foucaultian approach using the concepts of discourse, power, and knowledge structures (Foucault, 1972), Althusser’s (1971) idea of “interpellation” and ideological apparatuses (that positions the subject in relation to an ideal Subject), or a psychoanalytical approach (e.g. Fanon, 1965 or Memmi, 1965) highlighting the importance of the subconscious and the ambivalent desires in the formation of identity (cited in “Self and the Other in postcolonial theory”, 2003, para. 8). The concept of subjectivity as “constituted,” “subject to outside influence”, and “formed in relation to an other or others,” is critical to postcolonial theorizing (“Self and the Other in postcolonial theory”, 2003, para. 10). It links the questions of who constitutes the postcolonial subject, how the postcolonial subject is formed (e.g. identity) and created (e.g. discursive practices in research), and what kind of power relationships exist (e.g. between researchers and researched).

Given the postcolonial theorizing is divergent and convergent, the boundaries that define what and who constitutes the postcolonial subject remains complicated. Depending on the orientation taken to define the study of postcoloniality, the

postcolonial subject may be identified between two points of the spectrum the ‘settler-invader’ colonies (e.g. Native Americans and (Mexican) Americans in the United States) and the “colonies of occupation” (e.g. Indians under British imperialism) (Ashcroft et al. 2001, p. 211). Moreover, taking into account the heterogeneity of colonizing practices, other groups of subjects that have been displaced, oppressed, or under some other form of domination may be considered postcolonial (e.g. Irish). One may also take on a postcolonial identity as a form of political activism against prevailing or (neo) colonial structures (Harding, 1998). The difficulty in determining what and who is the postcolonial subject within postcolonial theorizing is that the inclusion and exclusion itself reaffirms a notion of “cultural fixity that contradicts the nature of the postcolonial enterprise” which seeks to go beyond the binaries of colonized vs. colonizer, ruler vs. ruled, or Third World vs. West in order to demonstrate the complexity of colonial/imperial operations (Ashcroft et al., 2001, p. 200). A theoretical problem emerges when postcolonialism delineates the postcolonial subject exclusively within a historical context. It is best applied as a tool for the analysis of cultural relations that examine other historical or contemporary cultural forms of domination and colonization (Ashcroft et al., 2001).

Dussel’s (1995) historico-philosophical work provides an excellent example of applying the concept of postcolonialism as a tool of cultural analysis. Using the philosophical concept of the Other and Gramsci’s social blocs of oppression to define the Latin American postcolonial subject, Dussel (1995) provides the multiple “visages (rostros), historical subjects, and oppressed peoples” that “make up the other face (te-

ixtli in Nàhuatl) of modernity” that are “covered over (encubiertos) by the discovery [of America], the oppressed within peripheral nations (and so doubly dominated), and the innocent victims of sacrificial paradigms” (p.119). The sacrificial paradigm in this case is the myth of modernity that legitimates its violent aggression toward the Other as a metanarrative of civilizing “whether it propagates Christianity in the sixteenth century or democracy and the free market in the twentieth” (p.71).

Thus, Dussel (1995) presents seven visages of the Other/postcolonial subject that have been *eclipsed* by the myth of modernity: 1) the *Indians/indigenous groups* that since 1492 have resisted to the oppressive designs; 2) the Africans/African Americans and their brutal slavery in the Americas; 3) the Mestizos (Indian and European *mixed blood* descendants) whose “structural oppression” has resulted from “cultural, political, and economic dependence at national and international levels” (p.125); 4) the criollos (the native European elites) who dominated by Spain, Portugal, and France merged with the Indians, Mestizos, Mulattos toward national emancipation<sup>13</sup>; 5) the peasants (made up of Mestizos, zambos/mulattos, and indigenous people) that emerged after the emancipation movements consummated in Latin America and today consists of the poorly paid laborers from the countryside; 6) the workers who after the industrial revolution in Latin America are now under world capital labor exploitation<sup>14</sup>; and 7) the marginalized “reserve of labor army” that has emerged as an overpopulation of urban unemployment (p.130).

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<sup>13</sup> However, the criollos after the independence movements “ended up monopolizing the power in the new national states” (Dussel, 1995, p. 128).

<sup>14</sup> Dussel (1995) and Young (2001) discuss more extensively the nature of the industrial revolution and economic developments in Latin America based on Latin American postcolonial theories (e.g. dependence theory).

The multiple historical and economic contexts of the postcolonial subject (s) whose oppression lies within the justification of the metanarrative of modernity provide an extensive frame that can define but not limit the conceptualization of the postcolonial subject. From this flexible postcolonial approach the (Mexican) American can then be defined as a postcolonial subject within Latin America's contemporary context that also extends to the cultural analysis of their pre-colonial presence<sup>15</sup>, dislocation, and border-crossing context within the United States (Acuña, 2000). However, the study of the (Mexican) American as a postcolonial subject bound to economic structures, history, and myth of modernity necessitates an in depth examination of other no less significant "sacrificial paradigms" that derive from the Enlightenment/modernist legacies—in the case of this study, the pursuit of knowledge and its research practices.

### **Othering/Alterity**

The interrelated concepts of Other, Otherness/Alterity, and Othering are critical in postcolonial theorizing. The concept of Otherness has its roots in Western existential philosophy, but in postcolonial theorizing, it stands for the *state* of difference and diversity (Ashcroft et al., 2000). The term alterity is preferred over 'otherness' because it is more representative of the philosophical shift in the conceptualization of subjectivity as constructed from outside influence, thus contextualized by political, cultural, linguistic, religious, historical, and intellectual structures (Ashcroft et al., 2000). The basic idea implied by the concept of alterity/otherness is that "the 'construction' of the

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<sup>15</sup> Historically, (Mexican) Americans resided in the contemporary U.S. Southwest during pre-colonial times (Acuña, 2000); thus, self-identified Chicanos in the United States embrace the pre-colonial (before the conquest) period as a source of inspiration, vision, and empowerment (Anaya & Lomeli, 1989; Barrera, 1988).

subject itself” is “inseparable from the construction of its others” (Ashcroft et al. 2000, p.11). The concept of the *Other* as employed by postcolonial theorizing derives from Lacan’s post-Freudian psychoanalytic analysis. Here, the ‘*Other*’ (e.g. the colonizer, the symbolic Father, or the imperial discourse) stands as the normative, ideal, or dominant framework in which the ‘other’ (e.g. the colonized, woman, or child) derives his/her sense of identity (Ashcroft et al. 2000, p. 169-171). Consequently, the concepts of *Other*, *Othering* and alterity are both a psychological and social phenomenon.

Psychologically, the self (group) constructs its own identity by differentiating from the other. As a sociological phenomenon, othering differentiates, marginalizes, and excludes the ‘us’ from ‘them’ based on racial, ethnic, geographical, economic, or ideological markers (Greenberg, 2003, para. 1). In this process of differentiation, the subject/group establishes an identity by constructing the others’ difference. The danger in the process of differentiation is that the self-identification/ self-affirmation “depends on the denigration of the other group” (Greenberg, 2003, para. 1). Moreover, othering represents one of the axes of colonialism/modernism that expressed the *will to power* imposed by Western imperialism (Quijano, 2000). Othering the *raza* (race) “came to reflect the *discovery* and experience of groups of beings very different from, indeed strange to the European eye and self” (Pratt 1985 cited in Golberg, 1993, p. 62).

Therefore, the identity of the imperial culture as superior and normalized is inextricable from the inferior alterity of the *Others*. Spivak (1991) defines othering as the process that uses various methods to produce the subject in the colonial discourse (cited in Ashcroft et al. 2000, p.171-172). Some of the axis of othering may include



preconceptual elements of hierarchy, order, value, classification, and cultural superiority (Goldberg, 1993) as well as structural elements such as patriarchy described by feminist theory (e.g. Aitcheson, 2000; hooks, 2000). For instance, the preconceptual element of order was particularly important in the Othering of South America because it encoded the diversity of its inhabitants and its natural environment (which were conceptualized as one) by ranking the emerging nations along the axis of democracy, civilization, racial compositions (full blood, half-blood Europeans), geographical location, and gender while establishing and privileging North Euro-American self/nation identity (Salvatore, 1996).

In sum, the oppressive practice of Othering has been critiqued by various fields most importantly by the field of anthropology (e.g. Hallam & Street 2000; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Oppressive othering has been discussed also in relation to the issue of social inequality as a mechanisms that 1) defines another group into inferior positions of e.g. normal/deviant, centre/margins, core/peripheries; 2) “turns subordinates into commodities;” and 3) “creates patterns of interaction that reaffirm a dominant group’s ideology of difference” (Schwalbe et al., 2000, para. 17). The previous section on the educational research discourse on intellectual ability provides an example of the various ways an inferior alterity has been constructed about (Mexican) Americans. For this study, the critique of Othering will be modeled after Said’s cultural critique on *Orientalism* (1978) which exemplifies a detailed account of the discursive process of Othering the Oriental. Such work is worth reviewing because it serves as a guideline for the study of the (Mexican) American/Other in research discourse.

## Colonial Discourse

Edward's Said *Orientalism* (1978) inaugurated a new approach to postcolonial critique, the colonial discourse, demonstrating the politics of knowledge production and culture (Young, 2001) as well as the moral-epistemological belief systems underlying the production of the Other—the Orient (Bauman, 1998). *Orientalism* (1978) demonstrates that the “ways of knowing are themselves mechanisms of power” (Bauman, 1998, p. 79) in that “the will to knowledge, and to produce its truth, is also a will to power” (Young, 2001, p. 387); thus, while Said's work exposes via discourse analysis the superiority complex and imperialistic attitude of the West, it also exposes the surveillance experienced by those that are Othered through Western knowledge structures—“Westerns are informed observers and their complacent gaze reduces other peoples to be observed” (Fox-Genovese, 1999, p. 536) and “depicted as something one judges (as in a court of law), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one studies and depicts (as in a curriculum), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual)” (Said, 1978, p. 40). Thus, *Orientalism* (1978) substantiates how knowledge structures that construct the Other are intricately tied to power and culture. The following sections will briefly summarize the key points and methodology found in *Orientalism* (1978).

Said conducted a meta-analytic literary inquiry that gathered evidence from philology (linguistics), lexicography, history, biology, political/economic theory, novels, and poetry to demonstrate how these literary pieces affirmed an imperialist view of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The variety of textual forms

demonstrated how the West *imagined* the *Orient* and reproduced it through various political, social, scientific, and ideological discourses that consequently created and sustained *an otherness* as part of an imperialist apparatus—the colonial rule. As Said succinctly explains:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views on it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3).

Thus, in the broadest sense, *Orientalism* is about the constellations of representations created about the Other through colonial discourse. For Said the representation includes both the political and literal application (Susser, 1999). Thus, Orientals were stereotyped and essentialized as “irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different” as opposed to the rational, virtuous, mature European (Said, 1978, p.40). The geographic Orient was depicted as feminine, timeless, bizarre, lustful, backward, and lazy—a total imagined contrast to the civilized, masculine, moral, and productive West. The negative stereotypes about the Orient/al appeared to contain an objective reality that consequently produced a monolithic body of knowledge about the Orient/al character, culture, history, society, and traditions. These pieces of information incorporated into the knowledge of subject races made their “management easy and profitable” under the “all embracing Western tutelage” (Said, 1978, p.35-36). Therefore, the Orient/al had a *statu pupillari* in need of the *civilizing* direction of scholars, missionaries, businessman, soldiers, and teachers of the West. The body of knowledge obtained, read, and constructed by the

West's textual "scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline, or governing" justified the West domination, intervention or interference (Said, 1978, p.41).

*Orientalism* (1978) demonstrates that the construction of the Orient in the arts, literature, science, and politics projected a cultural hegemony. Hegemony (broadly defined) is understood as a set of dominant ideologies that gain power through subtle and inclusive forms of power (e.g. education, media, literature) and become part of people's common sense and norms (Ashcroft et al., 2000). Furthermore, although Orientalism was also influenced by various forms of cultural hegemony (e.g. under the Christian religion, scientific racism/Darwinist discourses), it ultimately had a "vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them')" (Said, 1978, p. 43-44). Said (1978) points to the danger of this type of discourse,

When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and end points of analysis, research, public policy..., the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Westerner—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies" (Said, 1978, p. 45-46).

Thus, the division expressed by the Othering of the Orient is simply an expression of hostility by the West (Said, 1978).

### **Discourse and the Relationship Between Power and Knowledge**

Methodologically, *Orientalism* (1978) is a poststructural text that examined the configuration of power/ /knowledge/culture that resulted in systems of knowledge and social practices that created and were directed toward the *Orient*. Edward Said employed to a great extent Foucault's (1970; 1972) discourse analysis methodology.

Discourse analysis via Foucault (1970;1972) is not exclusively concerned with language as such but rather broadens to the discursive regimes of knowledge (academic disciplines) that “conform in order to be regarded as true” (Young, 2001, p. 385).

Foucault’s reformulation of the concept discourse derives from his attempts to provide histories of knowledge which are not histories of what men and women have thought. Foucault’s histories are not histories of ideas, opinions, or influences nor are they histories of the way in which economic, political, and social contexts have shaped ideas or opinions. Rather they are reconstructions of the *material conditions* of thought or ‘knowledges’. They represent an attempt to produce what Foucault calls an *archeology* of the material conditions of thought/knowledges, conditions which are not reducible to the idea of ‘consciousness’ or the idea of ‘mind’ (Hunter n.d. emphasis in original cited in Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 35).

Thus, the “development of discourse is an inseparable part of the formation of a discipline and the delimitation of the object” which ultimately is restrictive and productive (Said, 1985 cited in Young, 2001, p. 385-386). Discourse is productive in that it constructs the objects of study (e.g. psychopathology creates the mentally ill) which “do not exist independently of the definitional work” (Hacking, 1992 cited in Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 41)<sup>16</sup>. Discourse is restrictive in that discourse “always involves a form of violence in the way it imposes its linguistic order on the world” (Foucault, 1970 cited in Young, 2001, p. 386). In a general sense,

[Discourse] is regulated and systematic. An important proposition is related to this recognition: the rules are not confined to those internal to the discourse, but include rules of combination with other discourses, rules that establish differences from other categories of discourse (for example, scientific as opposed to literary, etc.), the rules of production of the possible statements. The rules delimit the sayable. But (except for axiomatic systems such as chess) they do not

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<sup>16</sup> This does not suggest that everything conceived as real is an imagined discursive production nor that there is an outside reality (e.g. mental illness) independent of discourse—the focus here is rather on how that statements of facts are productions of *truth* (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Refer to Kendall & Wickham (1999) for a more extensive discussion of the philosophical implications of Foucault’s discussion of no ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ to discourse.

imply a closure. The systematic character of a discourse includes its systematic articulation with other discourses. In practice, discourses delimit what can be said, while providing the spaces—the concepts, metaphors, models, analogies, for making new statements within any specific discourse...The analysis which we propose regards every discourse as the result of a practice of production which is at once material, discursive and complex, always inscribed in relation to other practices of production of discourse. Every discourse is part of a discursive complex; it is locked in an intricate web of practices, bearing in mind that every practice is by definition both discursive and material (Henriques et al., 1984, cited in Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 41).

Discourse analysis based on Foucault's (1970; 1972) recognizes discourse as a system of statements that are regular and systematic allowing for the differentiation between discourses (e.g. Orientalism, medical, educational, legal, etc.). Further, discourse analysis involves the identification of 1) the "rules of production of statements"(the conditions that allow statements to emerge); 2) the "rules that delimit the sayable" (production and repeatability of what is considered legitimate and true); 3) the "rules that create the spaces in which new statements can be made;" and 4) the "rules that ensure that a practice is material and discursive at the same time" (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 42-43). Thus, discourse via Foucault's philosophical formulations consists of both *things* and *words*. For example, the discourse of discipline consists of sites of power (schools, prisons, etc.), respective practices (punishment or reward) as well as the sayable (explicit rules and regulations about behavior).

The notion that practice is both material and discursive is critical in understanding knowledge/power/culture configurations. For Foucault, power is neither negative/positive, repressive/resistance, it is simply "practiced" and it is "non-stratified, local, unstable and flexible" while knowledge is "stratified, stable, and segmented" (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 55). Therefore, the configuration of the

power/knowledge structure via Foucault's philosophical formulations proposes that "discursive relations" are "relations of power" in that power relations serve to connect the two poles of knowledge—"the visible and sayable" (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 48)<sup>17</sup>. In other words, the role of knowledge actually supports certain techniques of power that control, govern, and/or manage (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). The following excerpt is helpful in understanding the knowledge/power/culture relation proposed by Foucault's philosophical formulations,

Knowledge is involved in...attempts to impose control or management: the economy should be slowed, the economy should be stimulated; the war should be stepped up, the war should be ended...Here knowledge is being used to select some techniques of [power] over others and to implement the chosen techniques in the attempts to impose control or management on the objects concerned...The knowledge used ranges from very simple, informal knowledge to very complex, formal knowledge and the range includes knowledge called rational, within modern social sciences, and knowledge called irrational (Hunt & Wickham, 1994 cited in Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 52).

Foucault (1978) maintained that "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (p. 100). Consequently, "Orientalism is characterized as a discourse produced 'in an uneven exchange' with different forms of other institutional discursive power" that through the production of knowledge demonstrate "a will to truth" that expose "a will to power" (Young, 2001, p. 387).

*Orientalism* (1978) described the discursive formation of the Orient that 1) constructed the common object of analysis—the Orient/Oriental; 2) expressed a common mode of speaking, perception, vocabularies, and representations found across

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<sup>17</sup> Foucault's philosophical formulation of power is rather extensive—for this particular section power is interpreted as a function or social practice (Kendall & Wickham, 1999).

the humanities and social sciences—based on the assumption of Western superiority; and 3) showed the interconnection between Orientalism as discourse and the system of concepts represented by Western ideologies of liberal humanism, capitalism, and scientific rationality (Denyer, 2002). It must be noted that Said's (1978) material and discursive analysis was only textual, focusing on the relationship "between different writings and institutions," but "not the productions of institutions or the relations between them" (sites of power) which is fundamental to Foucaultian analysis (Young, 2001, p. 387). Nevertheless, *Orientalism* (1978) is central to the critique of academic knowledge as "part of the apparatus of western power" that challenges the claims of "objectivity and autonomy" (Young, 2001, p. 387).

In conclusion, Said's (1978) work on *Orientalism* serves to demonstrate how Western regimes of knowledge about the Orient constructed an object of study, a representation of the Other that (re)inscribed and positioned it in an inferior relationship to the West. Furthermore, the act of Othering found in the discourse of Orientalism questions the position of the author as imbedded within a particular culture, history, race, that is politically bound. Moreover, it provides an excellent glimpse on the discursive formation of Orientalism and the regimes of knowledge that emerged—the formation of academic disciplines about the Orient. The political implication of *Orientalism* (1978) is that it exposes the Western "projection onto and will to govern the Orient" (p. 95) since "to say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact" (Said, 1985, cited in Young, 2001, p. 387).



No one has ever assumed that Said was making the simplistic argument that Orientalism was just an ideological supplement to European colonialism, fabricated consciously in the direct service of imperialism. White mythologies rather involve an operation of a will-to-truth in the formations of knowledge themselves. What Said shows is that the will to knowledge, and to produce its truth, is also a will to power (Young, 2001, p. 387).

Thus, one of the most noteworthy implications of *Orientalism* (1978) as a book and discourse is that it represents one of the white mythologies operating from a *will-to-truth* and *will to power* in Western thought and colonialism/imperialism (Young, 2001).

### Summary

Postcolonial theorizing is centered on the effects of the physical, economic, political, and intellectual colonization/imperialism across the world. Methodologically, it has divergent theoretical approaches due to the multidisciplinary contributions that have emerged from the fields of literature, sociology, history, cultural studies, and critical theory. The concepts of Other and Othering/alterity are important in postcolonial theorizing because they represent the multiple ways that difference or diversity has been delineated and acted upon by the dominant structures of colonialism/imperialism. The Other represents the postcolonial subject that is constructed from outside influences (historical, economical, psychological, and social) and that is embedded within oppressive structures (including both material and conceptual). From this theoretical standpoint, the (Mexican) American history and geo-political presence in the United States identifies them as one the earliest postcolonial subjects of modernity. Their history includes conquest and subordination as well as intellectual colonialism as revealed by the Othering found in the early U.S. educational research discourses. This kind of Othering involves a *will to truth* and a *will to power* in the production of Western

knowledge. Othering is best exemplified by the colonial discourse of Orientalism (Said, 1978). Discourse analysis via Foucault (1972) is about the discursive (the sayable), the visible (institutions and their practices) and power. Most importantly, discourse analysis is a tool that serves to reveal and critique the relationship between knowledge, power, and culture.

## **CHAPTER II REVIEW**

In the academic world, modern research has become established as one of the fundamental structures that builds the blocs of knowledge. Although modern research is an established practice, it is important to understand the historical influences (colonialism and Enlightenment/modernism) and cultural structures (measurement, patriarchy, and race) that have formed and developed this social construct. Clearly, race/ethnicity is the most common assumption that history has constructed and research perpetuated. It is critical to also understand that the production of knowledge implicates the researcher because “no one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of society” (Said, 1978, p. 10). And because

the tendency for Western researchers to impose even their most enlightened cultural constructs on Others rather than creating indigenized theories and methods to grasp the ontological essences of people of color is, of course, legendary (Stanfield, 1994a, p. 176).

Knowledge is not pure. This is not to say that knowledge/research has not benefited society in some form. The question rather can be framed around who or what benefits/profits or inverted to ask how research/knowledge oppresses/colonizes and

Others. This study builds on the question of how research discourses have Othered and oppressed. That is, how has alterity/otherness, difference and diversity, have been constructed through the educational research discourses of (Mexican) Americans. Prior to the 1980's, the intellectual and cultural deficiency model framed the educational research discourses of this ethnic group. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the educational research discourses post 1980's with the ultimate objective to further develop a postcolonial critique of Western research.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on postcolonial theory and critique. Postcolonial theory centers on the tri-continental experience and continuing economic, social, political, subjective, intellectual effects of colonialism/imperialism (Young, 2001). Historically, (Mexican) Americans, as well as other Latin Americans, represent one of the earliest postcolonial subjects that emerged with the rise of modernity and colonialism (Dussel, 1995). Although this study does not provide an overview of the history of (Mexican) Americans, their history of colonization and diaspora/immigration in the United States provides the frame of reference for a postcolonial analysis. This study is based on the concept of alterity/othering and colonial discourse analysis (a poststructural approach). The postcolonial concept of alterity/othering locates and identifies the historical and contemporary positions given to (Mexican) Americans in educational research discourses that create and depict difference. Thus, the study focused on the research discourses written over the last two decades and examined the conceptual frameworks that have created the alterity of the (Mexican) Americans.

The colonial discourse exemplified by Said (1978) provided a template to analyze the production of academic knowledge—in this case educational research studies. Said's (1978) study of the discourse of Orientalism is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter he identified "the dimensions of the subject," the Orient, in terms of historical, political, and philosophical themes (p. 25). In the second chapter, he traced the development of modern Orientalism. In the third chapter, Said (1978)

attempted to “sketch the present intellectual and social realities of Orientalism in the United States” (p.25). This study was modeled only after the first and third chapters by identifying the research discourses about (Mexican) Americans. Therefore, similar to the first chapter (Said, 1978), the literature review on the education of (Mexican) Americans identified the dimensions of the subject in terms of educational themes (see Chapter II, Section 3). On the other hand, the contemporary dimensions of (Mexican) Americans in education were examined in the first part of the study (Phase I). Using a content analysis, the first part of this study (Phase I) identified the themes in the educational discourses about (Mexican) Americans that are perpetuated through the practice of educational research. Therefore, Phase I provided a constellation of representations about (Mexican) Americans in education.

Furthermore, as part of this set of methods, Said (1978) conducted a discourse analysis via Foucault (1970;1972) in order to sketch the discursive rules that created the colonial discourse about the Orient. Discourse analysis via Foucault (1970; 1972) is an analytical approach that examines the configuration of power and knowledge. Discourse refers not only to language (what is said) but also to the social practices and their respective sites of power (refer to Chapter II, Section 4). Likewise, for the second part of this study (Phase II), a discourse analysis was conducted to identify the discursive rules that structure the research discourses about (Mexican) Americans. Thus, Phase II presented the conceptual framework (knowledge systems and sites of power) embedded in the educational discourses.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

The first step in the study involved the selection of research articles. A total of 119 research documents were selected based on a set of exclusionary criteria. Then, a content analysis was conducted (Phase I) on the selected research documents. Next, the discourse analysis was conducted (Phase II). The following sections provide a more detailed description of the procedures involved in each phase of the study.

## **DOCUMENT SELECTION**

### **Time Frame**

An overview of some of the main educational issues surrounding (Mexican) Americans was provided in Chapter II (Section 3). This literature review covered literature produced mainly up to the 1990's. This analysis focused only on research produced from 1980-2004 that has been electronically filed on Academic Search Premier (a multidisciplinary database). The database search and the data collection began on November 2003 and ended on April 2004.

### **Limitations of Database**

Although Academic Search Premier is extensive and multidisciplinary (totaling about 3300 scholarly publications), the database is still limited by the journals subscribed to this database. Therefore, the database yields only a list of electronically filed documents and not an exhaustive resource of available research documents. In addition, the search results on this electronic database are dependent on the search terms/identifiers employed to generate a list of records. Further, given the nature of electronic databases, the search results may differ if other subscribers or digitalized

records are added to the database on a continuous basis. Academic Search Premier also has the option of including other electronic databases, thus, different search results are created depending on what other databases are included in the database search entry.

### **Research Documents**

The selection of research articles involved successive steps. First, a preliminary search on Academic Premier was conducted to obtain an estimate of the number and kinds of documents found in the database. The Academic Premier database was extended to include the following databases: ERIC, Primary Search, Master File Premier, Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, and MAS Ultra, and Sociological Collection. The study aimed to provide a multidisciplinary discourse analysis and this extended database search served the purpose. The search was refined by including the years of publication (1980-2004) and by selecting only peer-reviewed documents. The preliminary search employed the identifier “Mexican-Americans + education”. The results yielded about 1800 articles published over last the twenty years that included research studies, books, and other kinds of document records (e.g. newspapers or pamphlets).

The second step involved narrowing the search results to a specific educational level. This study was based on educational research discourses at the elementary level. Therefore, the main search identifiers were “Mexican-Americans + elementary school” but other ethnic group terms were also used (“Hispanic”, “Latino”, and “Chicanos”). The ethnic group identifiers of Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano overlapped with the identifier of Mexican Americans; therefore, this appeared to be the most appropriate

identifier. Interestingly, the identifiers for “Chicanos” yielded a search result of less than five documents while the terms “Latinos” or “Hispanic” had longer search list documents of about thirty altogether. The search list totaled about four hundred and fifty documents.

The third step consisted of selecting the research documents. Excluded from the study were: 1) historical documents, 2) books and 3) literature reviews. The documents were selected on the following criteria: 1) research on elementary education; 2) the documents had to be less than sixty pages long; 3) if the ethnic group label was categorized as “Latino” or “Hispanic”, the article had to specify that they were (Mexican) American or be represented by a region considered highly representative of (Mexican) American population (2000 U.S. Census); and 4) (Mexican) American children had to be part of the study as primary research subjects or as major components of the study (e.g. program evaluation study). Although it is important to examine the discursive formations across different types of documents, the exclusion of other types of documents was necessary for practical purposes. Based on the aforementioned criteria, 119 research documents were selected for the study. They are listed as an additional reference list in Appendix A.

## **PHASE I**

The method for Phase I consisted of conducting a content analysis based on the selection of 119 research documents. A researcher constructed worksheet (Appendix B) was created to collect basic information on the research document: year, names of



author and journal. The following sections describe the procedures of the content analysis.

### **Content Analysis**

In order to identify the discursive themes that encircle (Mexican) Americans in education, a content analysis was conducted on all the selected research documents. The content analysis employed a constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.339-354). The text of each research document was unitized according to broad chunks of meaning. Categories were created and revised as data patterns emerged with each successive research document. When all research documents data had been unitized and categorized, discursive themes were derived and member checked by a voluntary assistant with experience in qualitative methods. This particular assistant was sought because of her extensive background in Chicano literature and elementary education. The member check procedures consisted of multiple discussions about the categories, the emergent discursive themes and the content and document analysis results.

Throughout the content analysis (and discourse analysis), reflective notes were taken to keep a record on the (re)construction of categories, the discursive themes, the results as well as the process of the study. The use of notecards was most helpful in the processing of data while electronic notes were more convenient as the results were organized and written up.

The content analysis took approximately eight months. For the five months, all research documents were unitized and categorized. The unitized data was pasted on note

cards and coded according to the document number and year. An assistant was hired to cut and paste the unitized data in the research documents. Copies of the original unitized documents were kept for the discourse analysis. About seven thousand units of data were collected. In addition, revisions and re-categorization followed for the next two months. The categories were member checked for another month.

In sum, the primary purpose of the content analysis was to delineate the contemporary *discursive themes* about (Mexican) Americans in relation to education. These discursive themes correspond to *what is said*. These results are presented in Chapter IV. The discursive themes provide a particular researcher perspective, thus, the results are not exhaustive of other possible discursive themes. Furthermore, the themes are closely associated with the second data analysis—an analysis in which power, knowledge, and culture provides the critical lens.

## **PHASE II**

For Phase II, a discourse analysis was conducted using a researcher constructed document worksheet (Appendix C). The following sections describe the two sets of questions (the conceptual systems and sites of power) that structure the document worksheet and its relation to the discourse analysis. The next section discusses the procedures for the discourse analysis. And the last section provides a summary of the discourse analysis.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

In order to examine the *discourse formations* in the educational research, two sets of questions were constructed to describe the conceptual systems and the respective sites

of power that fashion (Mexican) Americans as research subjects. These two sets of questions partitioned the educational discourse into the conceptual systems and the sites of research as social practice that contain particular power/knowledge configurations. However, these two sets of questions are not theoretically disconnected given that Foucault's (1970;1972) notion of discourse stands for systems of knowledge (ideas, concepts, ideologies, and other symbolic formulations) as well as the "working attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference, and courses of action suffused into social practices" including physical space (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 224). For example, education is a set of conceptual/knowledge systems (curriculum) with particular practices (e.g. classroom management) as well as physical spaces (e.g. the classroom). In Phase II, only the conceptual systems and sites of power are examined. Thus, the educational discourse was partitioned in order to highlight the systems of knowledge and the sites of power/authority within the social practice of research that form the alterity of (Mexican) Americans.

### **Research Questions**

Each question focused on different aspects of the conceptual systems and the sites of power embedded in the production of knowledge. Moreover, each question represented a semi-structure that guided the discourse analysis; however, each question had an emergent component that allowed the focus to be extended as the data were analyzed. The emergent component to the questions altered (in differing degrees) how the question was conceptualized given that the processing of the data entailed an interdynamic process of construction.

The first set of questions was designed to determine the underlying conceptual frameworks that were employed to construct (Mexican) American children as a definable group within research. The questions were as follows:

1. What are the philosophical lens employed to represent (Mexican) Americans?

The original intention of this section was to find the general assumptions researchers held about education and how to educate this ethnic group. As the discourse analysis progressed, other philosophical lens were considered, for example, the general assumptions about research (what is it and how to do it) as well as a general philosophy about human existence.

2. What forms of knowledge are associated with and/or against (Mexican)

Americans? This question sought to identify forms of knowledge that had specific power/authority configurations interwoven in the research document. These forms of knowledge were differentiated from discursive themes (from the content analysis) in that these forms of knowledge are tied to social institutions, they have social acceptance (e.g. by the community of scholars) and they consist of multiple conceptual systems (e.g. law and psychology).

3. How are (Mexican) Americans represented in research design,

implementation, and results? This question directly examined the conceptual frameworks that each research study employed to depict (Mexican) Americans. There were two primary frameworks that this question answered: 1) the research approach (qualitative/quantitative) employed by this study; and 2) if the study employed a comparative framework. Then it focused on the kinds of information that researchers

chose to include about the culture, people, or research subjects within the design of the research, the implementation, and results.

The second set of questions sought to highlight the sites of power that construct (Mexican) Americans as research subjects. The “sites” of power included both physical (e.g. institutions) and metaphoric (e.g. research community compliance) spaces that process some form of power/authority.

1. How are the discourses legitimated? In the beginning of the analysis, this question sought to find what forms of legitimation exists in the research documents that make the discourses hold a coherent argument (e.g. use of expert/seminal work). However, it extended to include the primary legitimation given by researchers to do the research study, the unquestioned discourses, as well as the space for opposition granted in the research discourses.

2. Who is conducting the research and where is it conducted? This is a straightforward question aimed to obtain information about the ethnic background of the author/researchers based on whether they have Latino or non-Latino surnames. The question also aimed to obtain information about their gender based on the first name. This question cannot determine the personal intention of researchers in conducting the research (e.g. professional advancement) nor the interface between the researchers’ ethnic background and the kind of research produced. This would necessitate another study; however, it does give some information about who is conducting the research. In relation to the place, at the most apparent level it sought to gain information about the

place where the research occurred yet the analysis extended to the reflect on the institutions that primarily produce knowledge about (Mexican) American children.

3. Who is funding the research projects? The objective of this question was to find out if there are any trends that tie particular institutions that support research to particular kinds of research projects. The rationale for this study stemmed from the early critiques of research (refer to Chapter I) that asserted that the government played a key role in the control of research. Therefore, this question sought to find (if any) trends that may reflect particular institutional agendas by institutions supporting research projects.

4. Where is the research presented and displayed? The purpose of this question was to determine the main sites of knowledge dissemination. Conferences, journal articles, and other types of knowledge dissemination practices (e.g. government reports) were considered in this question. Frequencies were obtained for the number of research documents that were presented in journals, conferences, and technical reports.

5. How are the research/knowledge discourses creating the alterity of the (Mexican) American? The objective of this question was to encapsulate the major constructions created about (Mexican) American children in the educational research and to determine how the created alterity is explicitly and implicitly delineated.

### **Discourse Analysis**

The discourse analysis was conducted separately from the content analysis. The discourse analysis took approximately five months<sup>18</sup> to complete. The process involved repeated readings of the research documents. The documents were grouped according to

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<sup>18</sup>Some parts of the Phase I and Phase II were simultaneously conducted (descriptive statistics on the frequency of e.g. qualitative/quantitative studies) when applicable.

the research topic—assessment/cognition, reading, bilingual education/ language, social/psychology, program/classroom evaluation, and random (e.g. health education). Then all questions were answered one document at a time and filed in a database. Next, the analysis consisted in finding data patterns across all research documents. When applicable, descriptive statistics were calculated for specific questions (e.g. percentage of Latino/non-Latino researchers). Similar to the content analysis, the discourse analysis reflects a particular researcher's perspective. It is an exhaustive analysis in that it is systematic but there are other possible interpretations to the data. The results of this analysis are found in Chapter V.

### **CHAPTER III REVIEW**

Epistemologically, this study is structured from the postcolonial lens of alterity as well as a *power* oriented perspective on the cultural production of knowledge. There are three main steps involved in this study. The first step consisted in selection of research documents. The next step (Phase I) identified the educational themes about (Mexican) Americans using a content analysis. In the third step (Phase II), a discourse analysis was employed to determine that conceptual frameworks that sustain the alterity of (Mexican) Americans.

Both analyses (Phase I and Phase II) are based on the concept of alterity/state of difference. However, there were at least two significant differences in the level of analysis between the content and the discourse analysis. The content analysis connected concepts and ideas into major conceptual frameworks (discursive themes) about *what is said*. The discourse analysis intended to excavate deeper (civilizational) assumptions

that underlined these knowledge systems within the social practice of research. Another significant difference between these two modes of analysis lies in the examination of power/authority. The content analysis does not discuss *power* while the discourse analysis incorporates the issue of power in the production of knowledge.

The results for both the content and the discourse analysis are presented as discursive themes in Chapter IV and V. It must be kept in mind that the content analysis only presents *what is said* while the discourse analysis reveals the less obvious by examining the alterity of (Mexican) Americans as objects of research. Phase I and Phase II analyses are interrelated but the level of analysis is distinguished by configurations of power/knowledge/culture in the production of knowledge about the Other—the (Mexican) American.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS PHASE I

This chapter presents the themes that emerged from the content analysis based on one hundred and nineteen research documents. It is not an exhaustive analysis given the subjectivity of the research method. The main characters are the *researcher(s)* who conducted the studies in elementary education. They are purposely set in an ahistorical conversation. Naturally, the research was produced within a sociopolitical, historical, and economic context but this is not analyzed in this study. Moreover, the discourses among researchers at times resemble a literature review especially when the main researchers give voice to other researchers to extend their positions or when examples are provided to illustrate a particular discourse. Due to the nature of the documents (all research) and technical writing guidelines, researchers are cited as necessary. However, this is not a literary review on (Mexican) American research.

The purpose of the content analysis was to structure the dimensions of the subject (discursive themes) that encircle (Mexican) Americans children in educational research. In the first part, the *problem* ascribed to (Mexican) Americans, their families, and schools is provided in some detail as well as the educational formulas set forth by researchers to solve the *problem*. The second part depicts how the theme of measurement saturates the researchers' discourse on the issues of intelligence, giftedness, and assessment of second language learners. The analysis then extends to the discourse of the psychological and social self that entails a wide range of themes specific to (Mexican) Americans (e.g. locus of control, self-concept, and ethnic identity). The

fourth major discursive theme entails a discussion about language, its multiple roles, and its relationship to second language learners. The discussion on language differences is intentionally placed at the end to contrast the *problem* ascribed to the underachievement of (Mexican) Americans to the *cognitive asset* ascribed to bilingualism. The last section presents a summary of the results.

### **THE INSCRIPTION OF (MEXICAN) AMERICANS/LATINOS AS EDUCATIONALLY LACKING**

The (Mexican) American child can be distinguished in the research by two major educational discourses—the low academic achievement and the high dropout rate. These two focuses of representation shape the essence of the *problem*. The following will depict how researchers state the *problem*, how they analyzed it into possible causes, and how dissent exists among the researchers' discourse in search for an explanation to the *problem*. A discussion follows about the extension of the *problem* ascribed by the researchers as the “dropout rate”. The predictive variables most frequently associated to dropout rates are delineated in terms of individual, familial, and school factors. The next two sections develop the themes on the family and school as locations of blame. The last section provides several educational formulas provided as solutions to the *problem*.

#### **Miseducation/Underachievement**

Researchers state that the low academic achievement of (Mexican) Americans and other minority groups<sup>19</sup> is a well documented phenomenon that cannot be ignored

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<sup>19</sup> These minority groups most often refer only to African-Americans.

because it is “arguably the most important of all educational problems” (Slavin & Madden, 2001, p. 4). For the most part, the *problem* typically described as “underachievement” is based on the performance of minorities on standardized achievement measures in comparison to the non-minority group<sup>20</sup> across the four pillars of modern education—reading, math, science, and writing. The *problem* is also described in terms of an academic delay, an achievement gap, a drop out rate, low college enrollment rates, lower grade-equivalent points, below the median educational levels, or by percentage of minimal competence in state assessments. In essence all these signifiers in the discourse make reference to a multilevel *problem* of educational attainment. At each grade level, there is a particular reference point of the *problem*. For instance, the underachievement *problem* in preschool and early grades is labeled as an academic delay, while the *problem* in the upper elementary and secondary grades is usually described by the achievement gap or dropout rates. The label for the *problem* shifts depending upon how soon “children can be reliably tested” (Dossey, Mullis, Lindquist, & Chambers, 1988 cited in Secada, 1991, p. 214). It is noteworthy to point that although most researchers stating the *problem* of underachievement refer to performance scores or rates, one exception is found in the research article by Rosales-Kruffin (1991) who locates the *problem* in reference to the educational system. The *problem* for this researcher is the “continuing undereducation, or miseducation, of Mexican-American youth” (p. 4)

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<sup>20</sup> Described by multiple labels—whites, Anglo, European Americans, or Caucasians.

In general, researchers fall under four explanatory approaches to explain the *problem* of underachievement. The most frequently mentioned set of explanations links the *problem* of low achievement to “at risk” family characteristics: low parental level of education, low socioeconomic status, parental occupation, low parental expectations, family size, family structure (single vs. two parent homes), lack of educational values, and lack of early home literary experiences<sup>21</sup>. Researchers identified language differences as another approach to explain the *problem*. Researchers point that historically language difference has been strongly associated with the academic failure of (Mexican) Americans (Cummins, 1989, cited in Kuhlman, Bastian, Bartolome, Barrios, 1993, p.3). This view is perpetuated in the current research literature, for instance, Slavin & Madden (2001) state that for Latino students, the issue of language complicates the reduction of the achievement gap. Similarly, Gunn, Biglan, Smolkowski & Ary (2000) comment that limited English language proficiency “may be partially responsible” for the low performance of students in reading (p. 91). A third explanation for underachievement set forth by researchers is the multifaceted concept of educational *mismatch*. For instance, the incongruence between (Mexican) Americans’ learning or cognitive styles and the educational environment results in an instructional *mismatch* (Dunn, Griggs, & Price, 1993). Cultural and linguistic barriers that limit “access to information about the school system” reflect another type of cultural *mismatch* (Cosden, Zimmer, Reyes, & Gutierrez, 1995, p.139). A fourth approach used to explain group differences in achievement has been attributed to the cultural testing bias of achievement

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<sup>21</sup> The family factors are also part of the dropout discourse.

measures (e.g. Kush, 1996). However, the researchers' discourse on the issue of cultural bias in achievement measurement diverges to another major concern –the identification and selection of minority children into gifted programs<sup>22</sup>. Few of the researchers mention that motivation plays a key role in literacy achievement (Arzubiaga, Rueda, & Monzo, 2002). Lastly, other researchers touch upon the relationship between social oppression and educational outcomes to explain underachievement among minority groups (e.g. Ogbu 1986; 1992 cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 124).

Researchers generated an oppositional discourse (disagreement and critique) on some of the issues related to the *underachievement* of Latinos. The first issue had to do with the relationship between standardized achievement testing and language. First, researchers note that variability in achievement performance within groups needs to be taken into account. Secondly, “differences in achievement test scores are subject to widely varying causal interpretations and raise many social and political questions” (Helms, 1992 cited in Cornell, Delcourt, Goldberg, & Bland, 2002, p. 190). Third, researchers remark that Latino students tested in their native language (whether that entails English or Spanish) still have low scores/low levels of performance on achievement measures—thus, “mere knowledge of English does not seem to narrow” the achievement gap for Spanish and English speaking Latinos (Escamilla, Mahorn, Riley-Bernal, & Rutledge, 2003, p. 37). Fourth, other researchers examine the conceptual frameworks of underachievement in mathematics and its relationship to *limited language proficiency* by noting that it stems from 1) the acceptance of the metaphor that

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<sup>22</sup> Testing and assessment are discussed more thoroughly in the following sections.

mathematics is language and 2) the correlation established between achievement in math and reading proficiency (Secada, 1991). The dissent about the relation between testing and language is further convoluted by researchers like Rodriguez (1989) that conclude that it cannot be attributed to standardized testing and suggest that the *problem* of underachievement be examined by other factors such as language, parent attitudes, or teacher behavior.

The second major issue of dissent among researchers has to do with the family “at risk” traits *found* to influence the *problem* of underachievement. Given that these at risk family traits inherently denote a negative influence, several researchers argue against it from diverse perspectives. Delgado-Gaitan (1992) critiques the cultural deficit views often ascribed to (Mexican) American families and cites numerous studies that have *found* that these families value education. Other researchers support this position by emphasizing the (Mexican) American family’s strengths and their contribution to their children’s education (e.g. Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, 1998). Cornell et al. (2002) also state that parent factors predictive of achievement are not the same for minorities and non-minorities; therefore, different factors influence achievement differently across ethnic groups.

In sum, the relationship between language and achievement measures demonstrates the different research perspectives that create a circular disagreement about the factors that affect educational achievement. Similarly, the dissent that emerged in relation to family “at risk” traits illustrates a shift toward the acknowledgement of assets of the (Mexican) American family as well as to the limitations of using the same parent

predictors for diverse cultural groups. These counter discourses need to be kept in mind as the issue of dropout rates also expands on the family context. In conclusion, Nelson, Knight, Kagan, & Gumbiner (1980) assert that in general the variety of explanations set forth to explain the achievement gap between (Mexican) American and other minorities to the majority group “are generally inadequate” (p. 323).

### **Dropouts**

Despite the fact that the literature was based on elementary educational research, the *problem* of the education of the (Mexican) American child extends beyond the early grades as researchers make extensive reference to the issue of dropping out of school. According to Rumberger (1987), a renewed interest in the *problems* of school failure resurfaced in the 1980s when the dropout *rates* increased (cited in Frontera & Horowitz, 1995, p. 101). This renewed interest in the educational discourse is quite noticeable as researchers provide plenty of numerical figures (the drop out rates) and dropout out predictors to describe the *problem*. The following is an example of the typical dropout rates provided by researchers—“with an estimated dropout rate of 40% or more, Mexican Americans represent one of the least well-educated groups among the total U.S. population” (Valdivieso & Davis, 1988 cited in Hess & D’Amato, 1996, p. 353-354). Furthermore, the researchers’ renewed interest in the increase of dropout rates for Hispanics in some instances 1) circulates back to the issue of poor results on achievement tests (e.g. Dunn et al., 1993) or 2) raises a concern about the trends toward higher academic demands required upon entrance to kindergarten or for high school graduation (e.g. Cosden et al., 1995; Frontera & Horowitz, 1995; Hess & D’Amato,

1996). Altogether, the researchers' discourse seemed to share the viewpoint that dropout rates in the culturally and linguistically diverse population are "alarming" (Sleeter, 2001 cited in Gibbons, 2003, p. 371).

Some of the researchers connected elementary education to the *problem* of underachievement through a discourse that establishes early childhood education as a critical component in the trajectory of potential dropouts. The "genesis and root of the problem is in evidence by the early elementary years" (Lloyd, 1978 cited in Rosales-Kufrin 1991, p.1). According to Frontera & Horowitz (1995), the relation between the dropout rates in secondary education to the elementary level lies in the rising academic demands that compel students to "psychologically drop out" as they experience frustration (p.104). Similarly, Rosales-Kufrin (1991) argues that the *problem* of "dropout is forged in the elementary school and the consequences are only visibly ratified later" (p. 1).<sup>23</sup> To surmise, several researchers shared the standpoint that "dropouts are made, not born" and the *problem* begins in the elementary school-age years (Rosales-Krufin, 1991, p.1).

Researchers also *referenced* multiple factors *found* to correlate/predict the *problem* of school drop outs. These included individual factors, family-influenced variables, family background, and school-related factors. In the case of individual factors, researchers provide lists of behaviors that differentiate eventual dropouts from "persisters" (Hess & D'Amato, 1996, p. 358). These lists include behaviors such as high

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<sup>23</sup> However, her study attributed the risk for dropping out to the quality of school relationships between students and teachers (as well as other environmental factors such as the family and neighborhood) rather than just the issue of curriculum and academic standards.



absenteeism, truancy, failing grades, low self-esteem, and a history of disciplinary problems. In addition, attitudes and educational expectations are also part of the individual factors that have been associated with dropping out. However, the issue of educational expectations seems to be a topic of dissent among researchers. For example, Hess & D'Amato (1996) cite how one study *found* that “future dropouts expect to attain less education” while another study *found* no difference in educational expectations between at-risk and successful (Mexican) American students (p. 356-357). Further, researchers postulate that the mismatch between individual learning/cognitive styles and mainstream schooling is part of the “high risk” to dropout (Dunn, Gemake, Jalili, Zenhausern, Quinn, & Spiridakis, 1990). For the most part, researchers rely on descriptive predictors rather than explanatory variables to discuss individual factors associated with dropping out.

Researchers brought to focus several predictive variables related to the family *found* to influence the likelihood of students to dropout. Researchers remark that dropouts come from families that have “inconsistent love and discipline,” permissive parenting styles, and minimal parent participation in schools (Rosales-Kufrin, 1991, p.8). Researchers also identify the non-English speaking home and the degree of acculturation to be part of the family variables associated with dropping out (e.g. Frontera & Horowitz, 1995). For instance, Zapata & Katims (1994) cite research that *found* that “speaking only Spanish significantly increased the likelihood of high school students dropping out of school” (p. 247). Then again, other researchers disagree by citing research that did not *find* a correlation between acculturation level and English language

proficiency to dropping out of school (e.g. Fernandez et al. 1989 cited in Hess & D’Amato, 1996, p. 354-355). Furthermore, researchers also provide the following family background factors *found* to be predictive of dropping out: poverty/low SES, ethnicity, family structure (e.g. single vs. two-parent home), parental education, and amount of literature in the home. However, researchers highlight that for the Hispanic student population the SES factor seems to be a far more complex variable given that research has *found* that it has “little or no effect on the dropout rates” (Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989 and Valverde, 1987 cited in Hess & D’Amato, p. 354). In short, while researchers bring attention to family background variables there is a continuing dissent on some of the predictive variables—especially on the issue of language proficiency.

The educational literature generated only two school related factors predictive of school dropout—peers/friendships and the school practice of retention. The impact of friendships had two different researcher perspectives—one based on the type of friendship and the other based on the number of friendships. For instance, Rosales-Kufrin (1991) remarks that the friends/peers “are both the source of family disapproval and the source of his school problems” (p. 8)—suggesting that it is the type of friendship or peer group that influences dropping out. On the other hand, Valverde (1987) *found* that the number of friendships had a significant influence on the decision making between dropouts versus those that graduated from high school (cited in Hess & D’Amato, 1996, p. 356). High school graduates had a higher number of friends than dropouts—suggesting that feelings of rejection in relation to the lack of peer support impact dropping out. Despite the differences in researcher perspectives, it seems that

both researchers agreed that friends/peers influenced the decision making process to leave/stay in school.

Researchers observe that the school practice to retain students is highly correlated with the dropout rate. Educational researchers find this “alarming” given that an estimated 5% to 7% of the student population is retained in the U.S. public schools annually (Shepard & Smith, 1990 cited in Hess & D’Amato, p. 365). Further, researchers argue that there are particular groups of students “more vulnerable” to this school practice (Cosden et al., 1995, p. 126). For instance, Latinos in general are more likely to be identified early with school problems (Cosden et al., 1993 cited in Cosden et al. 1995, p.126) and ethnic groups such as the (Mexican) Americans have a high rate of school retention (Hess & D’Amato, 1996). Some researchers find this practice problematic because studies show that it has minimal/short-term academic gains (Shepard & Smith, 1986, cited in Cosden et al., 1995 p.125); plus, this practice has negative social and emotional consequences for children (Cosden et al., 1995; Hess & D’Amato, 1996). Researchers also observe that the sex of the child places him/her at a disadvantage. Younger boys have a higher retention rate than girls; however, some researchers consider that this is more indicative of the parents’ and teachers’ acceptability to retain students than a function of the students’ behavior (Shepard & Smith 1986, cited in Cosden et al.,1995, p.126). In sum, educational research in part locates the *problem* of dropping out to the school practice to retain students in the early grades.

Although the research discourse certainly provides numerous predictors that have been associated with the likelihood to dropout, a couple of researchers provide an oppositional discourse that warns against the interpretation of such a list of predictors. Hess & D'Amato (1996) maintain that "being a poor, Mexican American child with undereducated parents" does not necessarily lead to dropping out from school (p.366). Researchers note that the identification of students "at risk" to drop out from *a list* is problematic especially when most of the population in a school meets the criteria for being "at risk" (Frontera & Horowitz, 1995). Moreover, Cervantes (1966) also cautions researchers "that no single list can unerringly predict" student outcomes and that circumstance and life events can "alter" the life of an individual (cited in Rosales-Kufrin, 1991, p. 8). Rosales-Kufrin (1991) supports this position by postulating that the dropout *problem* emerges from three environmental circumstances—the family, school, and *barrio* (neighborhood/community)—circumstances believed to "mold the child" (p. 1).

The following sections will discuss two of the most frequently emphasized child environments in the educational discourse—the family and the school. Many researchers agree that children are significantly influenced by the family environment. Similarly, researchers concur that the schools shape the educational outcomes of children. Moreover, both the family and school are discussed by researchers in terms of how they may add to the *problem* of underachievement/miseducation of (Mexican) American children and other minority children.

## Locations of Blame

### Family

The educational *problem* of underachievement MAs and other minorities has been to a great extent discussed by researchers within the broad topic of the family. Many researchers consider the entire family unit (including the grandparents and siblings) along with its ecocultural system to exert a significant educational influence on children (e.g. Arzubiaga et al., 2002; Birch & Ferrin, 2002; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Silverman, La Greca, & Wasserstein, 1995). Researchers present ample research to support this view. For example, a study by Reese, Garnier, and Gallimore's (2000) *found* that the family ecocultural factors (e.g. parental years in the U.S.) influenced the reading achievement of Latino children (cited in Arzubiaga et al., 2002, p. 234). Other researchers speak in general terms and point to research that has *found* that minority families offer mentoring, modeling, and support to their children's education (e.g. Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, 1998).

What is most prominent about the family discourse is that there seems to be a distinction in the degree to which family *influence* is associated with academic outcomes. Members of the family unit such as siblings and ecocultural factors may *influence* children's achievement but "today parents are still the child's first teacher" (Birch & Ferrin, 2002, p. 70). The difference lies in that parents are considered the main providers of early educational and social experiences (e.g. Cortese, 1982; Ortiz, 1993; Welsh, Doss, & Totusek, 1981). The following succinctly summarizes this research perspective,

“parental provision for active stimulation (e.g. encouraging children to develop hobbies and special talents) and family participation in developmentally stimulating activities (e.g. discussing television programs, taking long distance trips) are related to children’s school achievement” (Bradley, Cadlwell, & Rock, 1988 cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 126).

Furthermore, researchers associate the quality of parent *teaching* to the parental educational level. For instance, Laosa (1982) *found* that Hispanic mothers with more schooling tend to promote more classroom behavior by stimulating conversational and inquiry strategies, in contrasts to mothers with less schooling that tend to overuse modeling in task learning (cited in Kush, 1996, p. 572). This idea that maternal schooling influences the kinds of learning strategies acquired by children is sustained by other researchers that extend the parent as teacher perspective. Researchers have *found* that the educational level of fathers is significantly related to the early literacy development of children (Ortiz, 1993). A study by Laosa (1982) on Chicano and white families *found* that “the more education fathers had, the more time they spent reading to their children” (cited in Ortiz, 1993, p. 14). He suggested that the “intellectual disadvantage” observed in ethnic minorities can be explicated by the parents low level of education which affects their parent-child teaching styles that “diverge from mainstream classroom practices” (cited in Ortiz, 1993, p. 14).

While some researchers establish a relationship to *what* parents teach to educational levels and cognitive outcomes, other researchers establish a link between parenting styles (the *how*) and children educational outcomes. In a study by Schaefer & Edgerton (1985) on African Americans and white families, it was *found* authoritarian parenting beliefs had a negative correlation to school competence; in contrast,

democratic parenting beliefs had a positive correlation to school competence among kinder and first graders. They also *found* that intellectual development was related to the degree that parents promoted autonomy and conformity (cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 125). In another cross-cultural study that included (Mexican) American, Asian, and white families with children in kinder and second grade, parental emphasis on conformity to external standards demonstrated a negative correlation with school achievement (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993 cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 125). In sum, researchers ascribed an important role to parental childrearing beliefs and home practices in relation to educational outcomes.

In addition to parental characteristics, another segment of the research discourse converged on the parent-child relationship as part of set of family factors that influence children's education. Researchers cited studies that concluded that parent involvement in the form of school work assistance (e.g. homework) and high educational expectations positively impacted children's achievement and cognitive development (e.g. Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Hess & D'Amato, 1996). In particular, Keith and Lichtman (1994) conducted a study on (Mexican) American families and *found* that students with higher academic performance had parents that "spent time discussing their school activities" and held high educational aspirations (cited in Hess & D'Amato, p. 355).. Those students with less involved parents had lower academic performance. Nonetheless, the issue of the degree to which parents value education and its relation to academic achievement brought forth a critique from Okagaki & Frensch (1998) who argued that although this association has been established in European American families this may

not necessarily be the case for Asian and Latino families. They noted that for (Mexican) American children, no difference has been *found* among high and low achievers and the degree to which parents value education (Okagaki, Frensch, and Gordon, 1995 cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 125). In support of this argument, other researchers have reiterated that Latino/(Mexican) Americans parents do value education, do hold high educational expectations, and do have active involvement in their children's education (e.g. Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Prados-Olmos, Garcia, & Duran 1991). Therefore, the association between the degree of parental value of education and educational outcomes is evidently questioned by researchers. Nevertheless, other researchers continue to emphasize the role of parents in the education of children in other related topics such as school involvement.

Although this research study mostly focused on research documents that directly examined children, the discourse also touched upon the major topic of parent-school involvement. Researchers held that parent-school participation as well as their school attitudes “influences how children view” educational experiences and this in turn “influences how children behave at school” (Birch & Ferrin, 2002, p. 70). The general concept put forth by researchers is that parent “contact with school” impacts student school performance (Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 125). Nevertheless, the issue of parent-school participation compounds the *problem of underachievement* for the following reasons. First, several researchers cite studies that have *found* differences in participation rates between minority parents and non-minority parents. Overall, Latino parents tend to have lower participation than white parents (Figueroa & Gallegos, 1980;



Birch & Ferrin, 2002). Secondly, some researchers differentiate between the types of parent-school involvement. For instance, (Mexican) American parents were *found* to volunteer less in school activities (e.g. field trips, room parenting or attend PTA meetings) but were equally involved in other school activities (e.g. responding to school notices and parent conferences )(Birch & Ferrin, 2002; Figueroa & Gallegos, 1980). In sum, although general statements find Latino families lacking in parent-school involvement, there are distinctions made by some researchers in how this school participation is portrayed in the educational discourse.

### **School**

The educational discourse contextualized two axes of the *problem* (underachievement & dropout rates) to the school environment. Researchers generated a considerable amount of criticism towards various aspects of the educational system including the teaching force. As Hess & D'Amato (1996) comment

there is a growing recognition that the school systems can play an important role in increasing or decreasing the number of dropouts among minorities ...It is generally not enough to study descriptive individual and family variables that are related to dropping out. Researchers must attend to the educational and societal systems which contribute to a child's alienation from school (p. 365).

The educational discourse critiquing schools exemplifies this recognition among researchers. The following sections give an account of the educational systems' deficiencies that researchers considered in the literature.

Several issues related to curriculum and instruction spawned criticism among researchers. Although these issues were tied to either particular academic areas such as math or to more general areas such as literacy, the discourses converged to the issue of

instructional quality. For example, in mathematics the critique is that Hispanics do not receive instruction that supports higher order thinking skills resulting in a learning handicap for students (Cardelle-Elawar, 1990). Similarly, Secada (1991) critiques the elementary mathematics curriculum because it underestimates children's competence and abilities; thus it limits what children are capable of learning. Likewise, Arreaga-Mayer, Utley, Perdonomo-Rivera, & Greenwood (2003) reported on studies that *found* differences in the quality of instruction (e.g. time per day in subject matter instruction) provided to low SES vs. high SES students. Other researchers also commented on the instructional differences provided for minority groups. For example, Gutierrez (1992) cited studies that *found* that minority students did not receive effective writing instruction. Kuhlman et al., (1993) *found* that Spanish speaking children received instruction that supported mostly oral language development rather than writing skills. In relation to literacy, one researcher complained that school tasks did not have application or relevance to real-world literacy possibly forcing "children to stop looking for school-world connections" (Kucer, 1992, p. 567). Similarly, Resnick (1987) referred to the reduction of the curriculum as a "game" of symbolic rules that students learn to play and apply only to school (cited in Kucer, 1992, p. 568). In sum, the quality of education provided for minority students is an important topic of discussion among researchers that reflects a concern about the type of skills students learn and how this knowledge is relevant outside of school.

The discourse of *cultural insensitivity* emerged as another source of school criticism discussed by the researchers. A typical statement by researchers is that the

teaching force is not trained on issues of student diversity or to teach language minority children. Both minority and non-minority teachers are criticized for perpetuating racist structures (e.g. Rodriguez, 1981; Figueroa & Gallegos, 1980). Some observe that it is the white teachers who have been *found* to be the most reluctant to acknowledge the salience of race (Sleeter, 1993 cited in Benjamin, 1997, p. 39). On a macro-perspective, the discourse of cultural sensitivity also extends to the social evaluation of school curricula. For instance, researchers like Moore (1988) argued that the curriculum reflected the transmission of social hierarchical arrangements of status through formal and informal curricula that consequently reinforce the dominance of the English language, the Anglo history and its norms. Likewise, Benjamin (1997) critiques the school curriculum because it disregards the knowledge, language, and culture of (Mexican) Americans. In short, researchers sharing this broader social approach share the perspective that students do not “have access to more formalized knowledge about their language and culture available through texts” or other informal social configurations (Benjamin, 1997, p. 38).

The discourse of cultural insensitivity had several overlapping levels of criticism. As previously mentioned, one level is the broad perspective of social organization of the curricula that researchers criticize because it excludes the student’s culture and language from formal school structures. However, although this critique may involve support for bilingual education, it is a much broader issue. This extends beyond the issue of providing bilingual education since researchers also critique schools that have bilingual education programs because they lack systemic support toward language

diversity/difference (e.g. Benjamin, 1996; Stafford, Jenckes, & Santos, 1997). Therefore, this critique includes the social status of minority languages as well as the attitudes and behaviors inside and outside of the classroom by the larger educational community towards the native language and culture of minority students. Another more specific level of criticism that researchers discuss entails student-teacher interactions reflected in the *mismatch* between teachers' preferred teaching styles and student preferred learning styles (e.g. Gibbons, 2003; Kush, 1996) or by the low expectations of teachers toward minority students (e.g. Machida, 1986). One researcher even critiques the *mismatch* of "developmentally appropriate" instruction given to (Mexican) American students as too abstract (Saito-Horgan, 1995, p. 17). Yet, another level of criticism pointed by researchers is the failure of teachers to incorporate the personal knowledge of students specifically into the classroom practices (e.g. Bean, 1997; Slavin & Madden, 2001; Galindo, 1993; Cruz & Walker, 2001). In sum, the discourse of criticism that researchers produced contained the central perspective that there is an incompatibility/conflict between the values, cultural norms, and learning behaviors of white, middle-class school ideologies and practices and those of the minority groups.

Another discourse of criticism that emerged from the research literature relates to the different school practices that differentiate/segregate students as well as entire schools based on the set benchmarks of achievement. One of the segregation practices recently emerging as a source of concern for researchers is the state school report cards on accountability. Accordingly, these report cards stigmatize schools as unsatisfactory/low performing schools and puts pressure on schools to raise test scores

while ignoring issues of school resources and opportunity (e.g. Benjamin, 1997; Escamilla et al., 2003; Rodriguez, 1989). Another aspect of the discourse critiqued the practice of tracking students for ability or classroom placement based on language proficiency differences (Baca, Bryan, McLean-Bardwell, & Gomez 1989; Dunn et al., 1993). A third aspect of the segregation that researchers touched upon related to 1) the historical aspect of racial segregation in schools and the role Hispanic students have played in the desegregation of schools (Moore, 1988; Benjamin, 1997); and 2) the interrelated issue of allocation of school funds/resources and its effect on educational outcomes (e.g. Benjamin, 1996/1997; Secada, 1991). In sum, the researchers converged upon the issue of individual and state performance assessment and to a lesser extent provided a historical continuity to the broader social issues of school segregation (tracking students) and school funding allocation.

### **Utopian Formulas**

In finding a solution to the lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of the educational system, one of the most frequent educational formulas postulated by researchers is to train teachers and administrators on issues of student diversity. According to this viewpoint, professional development in diversity will help teachers and school staff be more sensitive and understanding to minority children's attitudes, resources, challenges, value systems and learner variations. Ultimately, the solution to train teachers in linguistically and cultural sensitive instructional methods has the objective to ameliorate underachievement and to ensure more adequate assessment practices by teachers and educational diagnosticians. Interestingly, a couple of

researchers assert that this kind of educational solution entails a personal initiative to reform within by becoming acquainted with learner worlds (Bean, 1997) and by gaining new knowledge and teaching skills (Gil-Garcia & Canizalez, 2001).

There are two particular issues in regards to lack of cultural sensitivity that gave further reflection in the midst of researchers' discourse. While a good number of researchers advocated teacher training in diversity, others believed that the "best solution to this problem is to recruit minority teachers since their experiences of institutional racism might lead them to be more critical of current school practices" (Sleeter, 1993 cited in Benjamin, 1997, p. 39). Figueroa & Gallegos (1980) disagree with this proposed solution and assert that "being bilingual and bicultural may not be enough" and instead advocate training that takes into consideration teachers' socio-economic perceptions that perpetuate social class divisions (p. 22). Also, it is noteworthy to point that some researchers provided a counter discourse against the simplistic conceptualization of cultural sensitivity training programs. They observed that it can produce only a sentiment of benignness rather than deep understanding and structural change that will lead to student academic competence and interracial unity. Thus, some further suggestions for cultural sensitivity included problem-solving strategies, the opportunity for the expression of diversity in schools, and well-structured and planned cross-cultural contact programs (Birch & Ferrin, 2002; Cruz & Walker, 2001; Figueroa & Gallegos, 1980; Gutierrez, 1992).

Another educational formula provided by researchers to reduce the *problem* of minority underachievement is to improve the quality of instruction. This

recommendation had diverse applications: reduce class size; design greater individualization of instruction; provide supplemental instruction in reading or other academic areas; establish additive bilingual programs; stress content reading development for ELLs; use concrete objects to teach science inquiry to language minorities; train teachers to provide individually tailored feedback in math; provide early math instruction in intuitive and problem-solving skills; and train teachers in task analysis and effective teaching methods. Other researchers simply stated the need for programs that would give additional assistance in order to ensure that ELLs succeed in the classroom (e.g. Cosden et al., 1995). In sum, researchers mostly provided general suggestions to enhance the education provided for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

A group of researchers also presented another set of specific recommendations related specifically to classroom practices. These included the following: foster cooperation/collaboration among students; establish a sense of trust among students as well as between student and teachers; establish social supports for new students in the classroom; create situations where children “will want and need to communicate with each other to achieve a common goal” (August, 1987, p. 719); and establish a metacognitive environment in order to facilitate the development of “effective thinkers” (Gil-Garcia & Canizalez, 2001, p. 9). In brief, the shared perspective among researchers is that the classroom environment/practices can accelerate or decelerate “the overall rate of academic development, especially in children divergent in SES, achievement levels, and measured intelligence” (Arreaga-Mayer et al., 2003, p. 30).

Another one of the most common recommendations that emerged in the educational discourse was to enhance parent-school collaboration. Birch & Ferrin (2002) remarked that although there are no magic formulas to improve academic performance, parent involvement in schools is an important component for student success. Other researchers concurred that the school culture needs to be accessible to families. Some even recommended the establishment of educational programs for immigrant families that address the differences between U.S. and Mexican school systems and the parent roles in the education of children (Baca et al., 1989). Moreover, researchers such as Delgado-Gaitan (1992) and Arzubiaga et al. (2002) maintain that it is necessary for schools to recognize the multiple ways (Mexican) American parents support their children's education so that collaboration and communication is effective. A set of researchers also stressed the need for social interventions that influence the family environment and consequently school outcomes. The most suggested social intervention consisted of providing before and after school child care for students, especially for single parent families.

According to a significant number of researchers the *problem* of underachievement can also be solved through the early identification of academic and socio-psychological problems. This discourse of early identification converged with the discourses of "at risk" student populations and the advocacy for early educational interventions. Some researchers differentiated between two processes involved in the early identification of "at risk" populations. The first process involves the accurate and refined identification of risk factors that can be applied to detect *at risk* student



populations in schools. Most of these “at risk” indicators previously discussed as part of the set of *researched* predictors associated with the likelihood to dropout are not specific enough to detect students “at risk” so researchers note that there is a need to further empirically define these indicators (e.g. Frontera & Horowitz, 1995). The second process of at risk identification entails the school practice to detect and classify children for intervention measures (academic or psychological). It is worthy to note that most researchers do not provide specific intervention or remedial programs targeted for “at risk” populations with the exception of a few programs (e.g. Success for All reading program) and the recommendation to reevaluate and set intervention programs at each grade level. In all, the discourse of early identification and intervention appeared as one of the most common educational formulas proposed by researchers.

The educational formulas provided by researchers emphasized several educational components: the teaching force, the quality of instruction and classroom practices, parent-school relationship, and the early identification and intervention of populations at risk. The discourse on the teaching force is limited to the issue of culturally sensitivity. On the other hand, the discourse on the quality of instruction and classroom practices appears to be quite diverse. The parent-school collaboration resonates with the family discourse that emphasizes the significant role of parents in the education of children. The discourse of early identification evidently reflects an issue of measurement in order to recognize academic or social *problems* and select students for interventions. However, this discourse is overshadowed in the discourse of measurement by the emphasis on intellectual abilities and giftedness identification.

## **REINSCRIBING MEASUREMENT WITH DISCUSSIONS OF BIAS AND GIFTEDNESS**

Assessment emerged as one of the main focal points of the educational discourse. Researchers discuss the *problem* inherent in traditional assessment methods and then offer some recommendations for the assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs) and minority children. The *problem* with traditional measures is delineated under the discourse of test fairness and applies to both achievement and intellectual measures but under different levels of analysis. The discourse also includes a discussion about how intellectual ability is conceptualized and its relation to the identification and selection of gifted minority children.

Researchers critique assessment from various perspectives that ultimately converges on the idea that testing children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds presents a methodological challenge (e.g. Arreaga-Mayer et al. 2003). From a general perspective, standardized testing is critiqued mostly from the case point of fairness. The lack of fairness attributed to cultural test bias surfaced as the most common objection to standardized testing. A couple of researchers pointed that the source of cultural test bias stems from the experiential background and skills of minority children which “are alien” (Rodriguez, 1989, p. 4) or “foreign”(Mishra, 1981b, p. 154) to the normal experiences of white, middle-class children. Nevertheless, it must be noted that most researchers made general statements about cultural bias without specific reference to the type of standardized testing. This is an important difference since

researchers that discussed psychometric studies made extensive reference to technical aspects of test bias specific to intellectual ability measurement.

Furthermore, standardized testing is also criticized by researchers for the reason that the performance scores do not produce sufficient information about the student's abilities and learning process. For instance, some researchers state that standardized/traditional measures place too much "emphasis on overall ability and not enough on specific behaviors associated with academic tasks" (Frontera & Horowitz, 1995, p. 114). Standardized measures do not assist "instructional decision making" for classroom purposes (Cummins, 1982 cited in Rodriguez, 1989, p. 6). Moreover, since "standardization itself rules out any contextualization of assessment" it does not adequately account for linguistic or cultural differences (Beaumont, Valenzuela, & Trumbull, 2002, p. 243). Similarly, other researchers claim that traditional measures do not adequately take into consideration the second language acquisition process—thus, penalizing English language learners thorough misinterpretation and unfair educational placements (e.g. Hansen, 1989; Beaumont et al., 2002). Indeed, a couple of researchers pointed to the overrepresentation of minority children in special education while others noted the underrepresentation of minorities in gifted programs (e.g. Aloia, Maxwell, & Aloia, 1981; MacMillan, Gresham, Lopez, Bocian, 1996; Sacuzzo, Johnson, & Guertin, 1994a/b).

A significant amount of the assessment discourse converged on the issue of intellectual ability measurement. However, divergent perspectives emerged around this issue. One perspective discussed the test fairness through the technical (psychometric)

evaluation of IQ instruments. This entailed a specialized research approach to judge if traditional intellectual ability measures contained various sources of test bias. Some of the sources of test bias considered by researchers included the following psychometric criteria: construct validity, predictive validity, factor analysis, item analysis, verbal loading/saturation, and adequacy of norms. Moreover, several researchers noted the significance of construct and predictive validity as the main criterions for test fairness for the reason that the existence of group mean differences makes the appropriateness of a test questionable and potentially jeopardizes “the equal opportunity of placement and selection” of the minority population (Mishra, 1983, p. 442).

While researchers agree that construct validity is a necessary criterion to eliminate test bias, some note that “it is not a sufficient condition for fairness in test use” (Mishra, 1981a, p. 182). This view is shared by other researchers that discuss the test fairness of IQ measures from a broader social perspective. For example, MacMillan et al. (1996) and Stevens (1980) dislocate the issue of test fairness and educational misplacement from formal IQ measures and relocate it to the pre-referral process where *student* behavior is informally evaluated and the possibility of teacher or school psychologist bias exists. Other researchers locate the issue of test *fairness* (in relation to different group means) to broader social aspects of equity such as lack of adequate schooling and socioeconomic class differences (e.g. Ima & Eugene, 1991; Murray & Mishra, 1983; Rodriguez, 1989).

Researchers departed from the topic of fairness to reflect on the conceptualization of intellectual ability and to present multiple views of intelligence.

Some researchers positioned the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) to exemplify a “reform” to the “unitary” concept of intelligence (cited in Sarouphim, 2000, p. 6). Other researchers acknowledged the multiple conceptualizations of intelligence and giftedness by experts, lay people, parents, and students. For example, Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, (1998) juxtaposed the views of professionals trained in psychology and those of lay people—the experts defined intelligence by traditional scholastic aptitude skills (verbal and logico-mathematic domains) while parents and lay people defined intelligence/giftedness by social emotional abilities in real life contexts. Likewise, Garcia & Stafford (2000) noted cultural differences in how parents from ethnically diverse backgrounds conceptualize intelligence based on motivation, effort, and ability. Other researchers reported on how students tend to equate academic difficulty to lack of ability (Heyman & Dweck, 1998 cited in Heyman, & Diesendruck, 2002, p. 409). Others also noted that in educational settings, English language proficiency/skills are related to the perceptions of minority children innate ability (Bernstein, 1973 and Vasquez 1972 cited in Moore, 1988, p. 519).

It is important to note that researchers present the modification of the concept of intelligence in close relation to the definition of giftedness due to one major concern—the selection of gifted ethnically and linguistically diverse students (e.g. Moore, 1988; Sacuzzo et al. 1994a/b; Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, 1998; Sarouphim, 2000).

Researchers connect the discourse of giftedness to the concept of intelligence in that a theoretical change in one influences the practical use of the other.

Adherents of a full scale IQ claim that gifted individuals are those with extremely high scores (two or two and a half standard deviations above the mean), thus,

constituting three to five percent of the population. Hence, in their view, giftedness is unidimensional and of one kind only. However, if we embrace the view advanced in the theory of multiple intelligences, giftedness takes many forms and becomes multidimensional (Sarouphim, 2000, p.21).

Thus, researchers propose alternative methods of intellectual measurement for the identification of minority gifted students. Several researchers presented an information-processing analysis approach to the measurement of intelligence as a more “unbiased” method for the selection of minority gifted students (Sacuzzo et al., 1994a, p. 4) and as better method to predict reading among low income children (Garcia & Stafford, 2000). Others suggest a developmental based approach such as those based on Piagetan tasks to ensure the adequate evaluation of minority students (e.g. Saito-Horgan, 1995). Likewise, some researchers view the interpretation of cognitive style (field dependence vs. field independence) as a more appropriate measure of ability (Kush, 1996). Other researchers propose the use of a combination of both qualitative and standardized measures for a more adequate assessment of bilingual children (Gonzalez, 1994) and for the identification of gifted “economically disadvantaged students” (Borland & Wright, 1994 cited in Sarouphim, 2000, p. 8). In sum, the shared standpoint among researchers is that different methods of measurement lead to different interpretation of children’s cognitive-linguistic abilities and consequently different educational placements.

Another portion of the assessment discourse promotes some changes or improvements to the systemic evaluation of language minority and ethnically diverse students. A good number of researchers agree that for minority students alternative measures provide a better method of achievement testing. Alternative performance-based school wide achievement tests are also recommended—especially for students in

transitional bilingual education programs (e.g. Beaumont et al., 2002). In relation to program evaluation and bilingual research, some researchers recommend longitudinal research designs in order to ensure accurate assessment of educational programs (e.g. McConnell, 1980; Medina & V. de la Garza, 1989). Similarly, some researchers encourage the use of ecological or contextual research models of classroom assessment in order to monitor adequate program implementation (e.g. Arreaga-Mayer et al., 2003; Gutierrez, 1992) and the simultaneous use of norm-referenced measures in Spanish and English for bilingual program evaluation (e.g. Medina & V. de la Garza, 1989). On state wide assessment, Escamilla et al., (2003) suggest that the progress of Spanish speaking students be continuously monitored, especially when students transition to the English test format of statewide tests. At the micro classroom level, other researchers suggest that teachers repeatedly monitor and assess student comprehension of instructional lessons (e.g. Gibbons, 2003). Overall, these set of recommendations provided by researchers rely more on technical and program evaluation design modifications rather than major alterations to traditional assessment measures.

In sum, the discourse on test fairness overlaps with the discourse of alternative assessment measures. For the most part, researchers concur that alternative methods of measurement are more *culture fair* and that they provide more in-depth information about the students' strengths as well as learning process and product. Moreover, alternative intellectual measures are a more *fair* method to identify and select minority gifted children. Nevertheless, some researchers add caution to the discussion by

indicating that alternative measures are still subject to error, subjectivity and may still be highly dependent on verbal ability (e.g. Beaumont et al., 2002; Sacuzzo et al., 1994b).

### **THE INDIVIDUAL DEFINABLE SELF**

The educational discourse created a (Mexican) American subject based on two axes of representation: the psychological and the social subject. The psychological and social self subjects are constructed by a number of research themes. The following sections expand on these psychological and social themes about the individual definable self.

#### **Psychological Subject**

Researchers discussed the psychological subject around three themes—locus of control, self-concept, aggression and peer victimization. The discourse on locus of control and self-concept specifically relates to research on (Mexican) Americans within a comparative framework. On the theme of peer victimization and aggression, there is the general research framework that lists the predictors for peer victimization and the psychological effects on children.

The discussion on locus of control was based mostly on ethnic comparisons (whites, African Americans, or (Mexican) Americans) through the measurement of internal vs. external locus of control and the correlations between locus of control and age, sex, SES, as well as academic achievement factors (e.g. Buriel, 1981a; Nelson et al., 1980; Shorr & Young, 1984). The significance of researching the construct of locus of control rests on the positive correlations that have been *found* between internal locus of control and school achievement as well as what it represents—the responsibility taken



by students for academic success (Nelson et al. 1980; Shorr & Young, 1984). However, ethnic comparison research seems to be *problematic* given that researchers speak from an oppositional standpoint that de-emphasizes group differences. For example, Buriel (1981a) points that (Mexican) Americans have been represented as exhibiting fatalism (external locus of control) as a cultural trait but that recent literature indicates no differences in internal locus of control when SES is controlled. Likewise, other researchers observe that research has yielded contradicting results and showing no differences between minority children and non-minority children in relation to internal locus of control. For instance, the Nelson et al. (1980) study coincides with other research studies in that there are no cultural differences between (Mexican) Americans and Anglo Americans in their locus of control as measured by *traditional* personality scales. Therefore, the general discussion on locus of control is an oppositional discourse with contradictory results.

The psychological construct of self-concept is widely discussed by researchers. However, researchers approach the topic from differing directions. One perspective is a discourse on the positive unidirectional relationship between types of instruction and self-concept. For example, instruction that develops problem-solving skills on young children enhances their self-concept (Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chiang, & Loef, 1990 cited in Secada, 1991 p. 215). Similarly, other researchers propose that teaching styles affect students' self concept—teachers “who accept, trust, and help their students will produce children with positive self-evaluation” (Coppersmith & Feldman, 1974 cited in Gumbiner, Knight & Kagan, 1981, p. 21-22). A second approach links self-

concept to issues of language. Some researchers suggest that a poor self-concept may be the outcome of “language difficulties that many Mexican Americans experience” (Dunn et al., 1993, p. 240). In contrast, others explain that bilingual skills contribute favorably to feelings of self-efficacy and academic performance (e.g. Saito-Horgan, 1995; Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). From this research perspective, language represents both an asset and a *problem* for the development of a self-concept.

The third approach researchers use to discuss self-concept entails a comparative analysis of ethnic differences between African-Americans, (Mexican) Americans, and whites (e.g. Franco, 1983). Researchers note that early studies *found* that (Mexican) Americans had significant lower self-concepts than other ethnic groups (e.g. Steiner, 1970 cited in Franco, 1983, p. 215); however, current<sup>24</sup> research demonstrates contradictory and inconsistent results. The contradiction appears to specifically refer to results that yield no cultural differences in the self-concept between (Mexican) Americans and whites (e.g. Little & Ramirez, 1976 cited in Nelson et al. 1980 p. 325). On the other hand, inconsistent results are reflected in research that considers generational status that has *found* a nonlinear relationship among (Mexican) Americans (e.g. Knight, Kagan, Nelson, & Gumbiner, 1978 cited in both Machida, 1986 p. 462 and Franco, 1983, p. 208). In conclusion, the discussion on self-concept resembles the discourse on locus of control in that contradictory research is presented by researchers to counteract early research on the topic of self-concept.

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<sup>24</sup>The *current* in the discourse is relative in this study but it does indicate research after the 1970s.

Peer victimization and aggression emerged as another topic of discussion among researchers. The discourse on peer victimization used a comparative framework to contrast gender and ethnic differences. Storch, Phil, Kncik, Masia-Warner, & Barlas, (2003) observe that there are few studies that have examined peer victimization rates as a function of ethnicity. This lack of ethnic comparative framework seems evident as most studies discussed by researchers focus on gender differences in relation to rates of peer victimization that distinguish between relational and overt victimization (e.g. Henish & Guerra, 2000; Storch & Esposito, 2003) and on how the sex of the child is moderated by other factors such as social withdrawal (e.g. Hanish & Guerra, 2000). The lack of ethnic comparison is also evident by the discourse emphasis on the types of predictors that increase the likelihood for peer victimization. These predictors are mainly concerned with individual psychological characteristics—e.g. externalized behaviors such as loneliness, manifest anxiety, social withdrawal, or aggression. However, some researchers also touch upon broader social conditions such as the effects of urbanization and the presence of violence that increase the likelihood that a child will be a victim/perpetrator of violence (e.g. Attar, Guerra, & Tolan, 1994; Silverman et al., 1995; Storch et al., 2003).

The discourse also engaged in a discussion about effects of peer victimization and aggression among children. Researchers view violence in society as an “epidemic” (Samples & CSR, 1997, p. 172) that affects children in several ways. For example, researchers comment that under these “extreme environmental conditions,” aggression is both a survival mechanism and a model of behavior for children (Attar et al. 1994, p.

398). Moreover, violence and aggression such as peer victimization leads to social-psychological adjustments such as depression, low self-esteem, and the development of stress symptoms such as posttraumatic stress symptoms as well as academic problems (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Storch et al. 2003; Storch & Esposito, 2003). In general, researchers share the apprehension that early aggressive behavior places children at risk to develop adult aggression and violence (e.g. Samples & CSR, 1997; Hudley, 1995).

In sum, on the first two themes researchers construct an oppositional discourse against early research on locus of control and self-concept that misrepresents (Mexican) Americans. The discourse also establishes a relationship between instruction and language to the construct of self-concept. The discourse on peer victimization and aggression places the child within an adverse social environment but confines this discussion to predictive factors and psychological effects.

### **Social Subject**

The social representation of (Mexican) American children in the educational discourse is composed of multiple interrelated themes that include a general discussion on socialization, the development of ethnic identity, acculturation, and social conflict. The discourse on socialization stresses the role of behavior and the role of cognitive development. The issues of ethnic identity development, acculturation, and social conflict are weaved into each other through a discourse based on the social relation between the minority groups and the dominant groups. The discourse on social conflict extends to the *debate* over bilingualism and bilingual education although the conflict is transformed under the issue of cognitive development.

The theme on children's socialization emerged as a significant point of discussion across the educational discourse. The general concept shared among researchers is that the socialization of children entails learning norms, rules, and behavioral expectations for a "variety of interpersonal situations" (Phinney, Rotheram, & Romero, 1985, p. 2). Behaviors take a primary role in the discourse as researchers observe that it is in school that children learn prosocial behavior (Gumbiner et al., 1981) such as leadership (Moore, 1988) and career vocations (Bobo, Hildreth, & Durodoye, 1998). Similarly, researchers comment on the home environment as the place where parental socialization teaches children adaptive behaviors for a changing social order (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992) and to meet the "demands of a highly urban environment" (Rivas, 1984, p. 74). Others observe that the socialization of behavior of children living in a multiethnic environment is bidirectional—"behavior is not only influenced by the culture in which one develops (by enculturation), but also by other cultures impinging from outside (by acculturation)" (Berry et al. 1986, p. 291, cited in Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1990, p. 543). Several researchers (e.g. Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993; Phinney et al., 1985) add to the discussion of the socialization of children living in a multiethnic environment by noting that there "there is considerable evidence showing ethnic differences in children's behavior" (Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1990, p. 542). Nevertheless, the discourse lacks specificity on particular social expectations that lead to ethnic differences in behavior.

The discourse on the socialization of children's behavior also includes another aspect—the conformity to cultural norms and rules. Some researchers view conformity

as part of an educational process that insures acceptance (e.g. Riojas-Gonzalez, 1998) while others discuss it in terms of adherence to a prescribed authority to social structures (e.g. Witkin et al., 1974 cited in Rivas, 1984 p. 68). Researchers like Eisenberg (1986) discuss conformity as an “awareness” of social norms—suggesting a cognitive and developmental process (cited in Rotheram & Phinney, 1990, p. 554). This resonates with other researchers that discuss socialization in terms of cognitive development. In all, the discourse on the conformity to social norms and rules centers on the notion that children go through a learning process that entails the acquisition of behaviors.

As previously mentioned, the discourse of socialization focuses on the cognitive development; however, it branches off into the topics of cognitive styles and ethnic identity. Some researchers note the relationship between field dependent/independent cognitive styles to socialization experiences. Accordingly, cultural groups that have field dependent cognitive styles seem to have an “adherence and exposure to norms of social traditionalism, such as extended patriarchal structures, strict obedience to parental authority, emphasis on conformity, and restriction of emotional autonomy” (Witkin et al. 1974 cited in Rivas, 1984, p. 68). For instance, the greater field dependence *found* in (Mexican) Americans is interpreted to be the outcome of the cultural patterns of socialization that instills respect and convention toward authority as well as “a strong identification within the family” (Witkin & Berry 1975, cited in Nelson et al. 1980, p. 324-325). In all, the main proposition set forth by researchers is that there are differences in how children are socialized into “strategies of thought” (Hess & Shipman,

1965) that result into “culturally based” cognitive learning styles (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974) (cited in Rivas, 1984 p. 69).

On the other hand, another part of the socialization discourse links cognitive development to the development of ethnic identity. For example, researchers discuss the development of ethnic identity in terms of “young children of color” constructing social categories based on race (Hudley, Wakefield, Scott, Bui, & Cuellar, 2000, p. 6) and applying these social categories to appropriate ethnic labels (e.g. Chavez, Moran, Reid, & Lopez, 1997). Similarly, researchers postulate models of ethnic development that correspond to the stages of cognitive development (e.g. Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, & Cota, 1990)<sup>25</sup>. Researchers comment that this perspective on the socialization of ethnic minority based on cognitive developmental psychology is to be expected since much of the work on minority identity formation has been done by this particular field of knowledge (Benjamin, 1997). In sum, the field of cognitive development permeates the discourse of socialization whether it is discussing the acquisition of behaviors, modes of thinking, or ethnic identity development.

The social representation of (Mexican) Americans in the educational discourse included to a great extent the topic of ethnic identity. Researchers define ethnic identity in various ways —as a set of self-ideas about one’s group membership (e.g. Knight et al., 1993); a set of behaviors, attitudes, values that distinguish the self from another ethnic group (e.g. Knight et al. 1990); or by the retention of a native language (e.g. Benjamin, 1996; Stafford, Jenckes, & Santos, 1997). The shared perspective is that

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<sup>25</sup> The discussion of the developmental models is discussed in the following section on ethnic identity.

ethnic identity is one aspect of self-concept and that self-concept is “the psychological sense or consciousness of self within the context of social reality” (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990, cited in Towell, Schulz, Demetrulias, & Mayer, 1997, p. 4). Similarly, Bernal, Saenz, and Knight (1991) propose that ethnic identity is part of an individual’s self-conception that holds multiple social identities (cited in Okagaki, Frensch, & Dodson, 1996, p. 471). This definition broadens the concept of ethnic identity by viewing it as one of the multiple social identities that an individual can hold and express within a particular social context. Altogether, the definitions presented by researchers delineate and construct the concept of an ethnic identity as part of the broader notion of self concept.

Researchers also discussed the functions of an ethnic identity as a form of social resistance or a psychological protection. For example, some researchers interpret the retention of the native language to be a form of resistance against racial hostility in schools (e.g. Benjamin, 1996). Other researchers theorize that ethnic identity is a “psychological buffer” that helps to cope with discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatization (Quintana & Vera, 1999, p. 388). Furthermore, researchers believe that for minority groups an ethnic identity promotes the development of a sense of well-being, a higher self-worth, and as well as feelings of security (e.g. Buriel, 1981b; Rotheram-Borus & Phinney, 1990). However, the counterpart to this discourse reveals another less positive aspect to the formation of an ethnic identity. Some researchers remark that the process of acculturation has some negative psychological effects for minorities. For instance, some researchers state that children experience inner conflict



and acculturative stress associated with being part of two cultures (e.g. Chavez et al., 1997). Note that the discourse of *inner* conflict found in the formation of ethnic identity resonates with the *external* conflict found in bilingual education—the only difference is the latter focuses on broader social conflict.

Furthermore, some models were presented by researchers to theorize about the ethnic identity development of minority children. In general, the models compartmentalized ethnic identity into dimensions such as ethnic identification, ethnic knowledge, ethnic preferences, and ethnic constancy. Researchers like Knight et al. (1993) present models that specifically aim to theorize about (Mexican) American ethnic development. In these models as well as in the general discourse on ethnic identity formation, the common unit of analysis is based on the socialization of the family. Furthermore, these models contain another common perspective—that ethnic identity is formed in relation to the dominant, mainstream, “host society” (Gordon, 1978, cited in Buriel, 1981b, p. 4). However, researchers propose that not all theorized dimensions of ethnic identity, in particular ethnic knowledge, are in considerable relation to the dominant culture since “knowledge about the other ethnic groups, other than as necessary to define one’s group, is not viewed as part of ethnic identity” (Bernal et al. 1990, p. 4). Other researchers expressed a similar sentiment when they posit that minority children can maintain a cultural identity within two cultural systems (e.g. Ogbu, 1992 cited in Okagaki et al., 1996, p. 469)—“although many Mexican Americans have adopted values of culture which they have encountered, in American society, the original core of values remains” (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974, p. 40 cited in Rivas, 1984, p. 69).

Nevertheless, the discourse of acculturation and biculturalism inherently establish the identity of minorities in relation to the dominant culture. Conceptually, acculturation and biculturalism is viewed by most researchers from a perspective of adaptation. For instance, researchers apply the concept of acculturation as a way to understand the social adjustment or psychosocial *adaptation* of (Mexican) Americans to the United States (e.g. Buriel, 1981b; Chavez et al., 1997). Likewise, biculturalism is considered the “ideal cultural *adaptation* strategy” to the “competing demands of two cultural worlds” (Buriel, 1998 cited in Weisskirch & Alva, 2002, p. 370). On the other hand, some researchers view biculturalism from a conflict free perspective—e.g. it is the “integration of the competencies and sensitivities associated with two cultures within a single person” (Ramirez, Castaneda, & Cox, 1977 cited in Buriel 1981b, p. 3) and the positive attitude and acceptance toward both the native culture and mainstream culture (La Fromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993 cited in Okagaki et al., 1996, p. 470). In sum, the discourse on acculturation and biculturalism in relation to ethnic identity development is dependent on the co-existence with the dominant culture.

Furthermore, the discourse of acculturation diverges to generate a discourse that analyzes the *contact* of two cultures from historical and current perspective on social conflict. One of the most frequently mentioned issues of cultural conflict is expressed under the discussion of assimilation. For example, schools are identified to be one of the main mechanisms of assimilation that through various levels (ideologically, politically, or linguistically) manifest dominance over minority groups. Accordingly, assimilationist agendas “have enforced this sociopolitical reality, coercing both immigrant and

indigenous peoples to give up their ethnic and linguistic identities” (Benjamin, 1997, p. 37). Researchers also discuss social divisions in terms of the prevalence of ethnic prejudice and social discrimination between majority and minority groups as well as within ethnic groups. For instance, Hudley et al. (2000) state the “evidence abounds of children’s negative and violent school relations” attributed to racial tensions that emerge from “cross-racial contact” (p. 3). The social division within ethnic groups referred by some as internalized racism (e.g. Quintana & Vera, 1999) is exemplified by the negative perceptions and attitudes toward recent immigrants or those that are Spanish speakers (e.g. Baquedado-Lopez, 1997; Benjamin, 1997). The discourse on cultural conflict also associates educational outcomes to social oppression by postulating that minority children develop an “oppositional identity” (Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986, cited in Baca et al., 1989, p. 17) that deters children from engaging in mainstream education (Ogbu, 1992 cited Okagaki et al. 1996, p. 481).

In addition, the discourse on social conflict is characterized by the historical accounts of language loss experienced by minorities in the U.S. as the bilingual education *debates*. Researchers that speak about language dominance refer to the historical extermination of native languages in the U.S. educational system (e.g. Smith, 1999), the historical (and present) push for all English (e.g. Baquedado-Lopez, 1997; Benjamin, 1996/1997) and the everyday experiences of minority students in schools where their native language has an inferior social status (e.g. Stafford et al., 1997). Furthermore, researchers extensively discuss the inferior status given to the Spanish language both through formal and informal school practices—e.g. the lack of materials

in the native language or the exclusive use of dominant language by school staff (e.g. August, 1987; Foorman et al., 1981; Smith, 1999).

Social conflict is also reflected by the bilingual education debates or controversies. However, for the most part the social conflict transforms into issues of measurement in relation to cognitive development and critiques over research methodology. For instance, the discourse revisits early research on bilingualism that measured cognitive growth and typically gave mixed or contradictory results. For this reason, many researchers cite Pearl and Lambert (1962; 1972) to criticize early studies for their inadequate research methodologies —e.g. lack of research control over internal and external validity factors (cited in Saito-Horgan, 1995, p. 4). Furthermore, in addition to the methodological issues that make a case for bilingualism/bilingual education, the *debate* broadens to a theoretical critique. Again, many researchers refer to the work of Pearl and Lambert (1962) and Cummins' (1981) to distinguish between “additive” vs. “subtractive” bilingual programs that promote balanced bilingualism and cognitive development—especially, metacognition abilities. The most salient aspect of the past and present social conflict found in the bilingual education controversy is how researchers reduce it to the issue of “conclusiveness”. The majority of the researchers find current research conclusive with “overwhelming support” for the “positive influence of bilingualism and cognitive development” (e.g. Gonzalez, 1994, p. 418). Overall, the discourse presents both sides of the bilingualism/bilingual education *debate* and provides support for bilingualism, bilingual education, or second language curriculum (e.g. Ginsburg & McCoy, 1981). Moreover, although historical continuity is

provided in terms of research support for bilingual education and the *controversy* is decontextualized, its foundation stems from the broader sociopolitical and economic conflict reflected on the more explicit terms of language loss and cultural domination.

### **SHADOWS OF MONOLINGUAL THEORIES**

Language takes a critical role in the educational research discourse. In the previous section, language had a role in the identity of (Mexican) Americans and it also reflected one aspect of the social conflict inherent in the *contact* between oppressed and majority cultural groups in the U.S. From a structuralist perspective, language is represented by multiple functional roles. One of the most salient functions is rooted in the relationship established between thought/cognition and language. Furthermore, the language discourse concentrates to a large degree on second language acquisition of linguistic minorities, especially (Mexican) American children.

Researchers provide an extensive account on how language serves multiple functions. As previously mentioned, researchers consider language to be an instrument for ethnic identification, social roles, and social cohesion. For example, language can organize the collective experience to express opposition and resistance (Chatterjee, 1993) to past and present social experience (Morgan, 1995) (cited in Baquedado-Lopez, 1997, p. 28). In relation to the dominant culture, language is considered a “means for entry into the culture” (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002, p. 376) as well as a mechanism of social mobility (Stafford et al., 1997). From an individualistic perspective, language functions as a mode to process emotions (e.g. Vaño, & Pennebaker, 1997), to reason (e.g. Heyman & Diesendruck, 2002) and to think (e.g. Foorman, Arias-Godinez, &

Gonzalez, 1981). Taken together, the differing perspectives on language express the “interrelationship between language, culture, and society” (Smith, 1999, p. 275).

The relationship between thought and language has been part of a *debate* since the 1950s that contains differing positions to explain or negate the existence of the relationship (Foorman et al., 1981; Gonzalez, 1994). Nevertheless, the majority of the researchers in the discourse adhere to the position that language affects thought. For instance, Heyman & Deissendruck (2002) suggest that “language can affect reasoning about people in various and subtle ways” (p. 414). Likewise, other researchers affirm that individuals acquire language as a “tool for thinking” during early childhood (Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, 1998, p. 43). Other researchers take a middle ground by acknowledging that language is an instrument for the organization of thought but they also assert that “language is not enough to explain thought” (Piaget, 1968 cited in Saito-Horgan, 1995, p. 3).

Researchers allocate significant attention to the relationship between cognition and thought and this is exemplified by the discourse on second language acquisition. The discourse on second language acquisition has a strong cognitive component. As mentioned previously, a great portion of the bilingual *debate* focuses on the cognitive advantages of bilingualism/bilingual education in terms of second language acquisition. For instance, the advantages listed include the following: higher levels of cognitive ability, greater flexibility of thought/divergent thinking, and the development of metalinguistic and metacognitive skills. Hence, the discourse on second language

acquisition intersects with the thought-language *debate*. Nonetheless, the discourse on second language acquisition also incorporates other important components.

The acquisition of a second language stands as one the major axis of representation for Spanish-speaking, (Mexican) Americans/Latino students. According to some researchers, second language acquisition is one aspect of the curriculum that “is perhaps one of the most important for non-English speaking students and their education” (Escamilla, & Cogburn-Escamilla, 1980, p. 6). This shared sentiment is reflected by the research on a multitude of relationships that examine second language acquisition to educational outcomes—e.g. the relationship between reading and television viewing (Blosser, 1988). Also, it is reflected in how researchers discuss the influence of the Spanish language on the acquisition and process of English (or vice versa how English influences Spanish), the process of code-switching, or how literacy is influenced by the structural differences between the Spanish and English languages. Furthermore, the importance of second language acquisition is latent in the assessment discourse that advocates for alternative forms of evaluation that consider the development of second language acquisition. Indeed, the educational research discourse on (Mexican) Americans and other Latino children depends to a significant degree on the issue of second language acquisition.

Aside from the apparent importance given to second language acquisition, there are two significant characteristics that emerge from the educational discourse on second language acquisition. The first characteristic is that context and peers play a critical role in second language learning. For example, it is posited that “second language skills are

learned and exhibited more rapidly in informal situations” (Cummins & Swain, 1986, cited in Langer, Bartolome, Vasquez, & Lucas, 1990, p. 428) and that social interaction with peers enhances oral language skills in English (e.g. Hansen, 1989; August, 1987). The influence of context in relation to second language acquisition also includes the quality and delivery of instruction—for example, researchers reference Krashen’s (1981) theory of comprehensible input and affective filters (e.g. Blosser, 1988; Gibbons, 2003). A second characteristic of the discourse is how researchers juxtapose the development of writing and reading skills of English language learners to that of the *monolingual* English students. Researchers note that the writing development of English language learners is similar to “native speakers learning to write English” (Hudelson, 1984 cited in Kuhlman et al., 1993, p. 6). Likewise, researchers converge on the notion that reading for both English language learners and *native* speakers entails a process of meaning construction and interaction between an engaged reader and the text.

However, researchers discuss two particular differences among second language readers and monolingual readers. The first is that for second language learners prior/background knowledge is a highly significant educational factor given the cultural dissonance between schools and home culture and the culture-specific nature of texts (Beaumont et al., 2002; Langer et al., 1990). It is worthy to note that prior knowledge is not viewed from a deficit perspective, rather, researchers refer to it as “funds of knowledge” (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992 cited in Bean, 1997, p. 51) or as a set of “linguistic and cultural resources” (Galindo, 1993, p. 95). In all, the discourse on funds



of knowledge advocates that the culture of minority children should be utilized in the classroom.

Another dissimilarity noted between second language readers and monolingual readers includes instructional modifications. For example, researchers that focus on the “*mismatch* between English text difficulty and second language proficiency” advocate a progressive exposure of increasing text difficulty for second language learners (Langer et al., 1990, p. 428). But this is based on the assumption that language proficiency precedes reading comprehension. Other researchers disagree based on Cummins (1981) hypothesis of transference<sup>26</sup>. This hypothesis proposes that a student’s well-established reading skills in the native language will transfer to the second language reading process so that reading comprehension can be independent of the second language proficiency (Beaumont et al., 2002). Therefore, the instructional modification consists of giving the opportunity to English language learners to discuss the English text in their dominant language in order to demonstrate reading comprehension (Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, in preparation/1986 cited in both Beaumont et al., 2002, p. 245 and Langer et al. 1990, p. 428).

In sum, the discourse on language is connected to cognitive development. The discourse on second language acquisition is embedded in the philosophical debate about the relationship between language and thought. Thus, the connection is evident in the bilingual education controversies that discuss the advantages of bilingualism in terms of cognitive gains. In addition, language is used to represent (Mexican) American learning

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<sup>26</sup> Cummins (1981) theory on bilingualism and its relation to reading is much more intricate than what the emergent discourse presents, but the goal of the analysis is to find themes not to explain.

a second language as similar (e.g. stages of writing development) yet different than English monolinguals (e.g. educational needs). Language also stands as a major marker of ethnic identity that defines the social subject. However, there are other social and psychological functions ascribed to language (e.g. to process emotion and share stories). In all, the discourse on language represents (Mexican) Americans mainly as second language learners.

#### **CHAPTER IV REVIEW**

The purpose of the content analysis (Phase I) was to identify the contemporary *dimensions of the subject*—(Mexican) Americans in education. These dimensions/themes were identified using a constant comparative method. The discursive themes delineated *what is said* about (Mexican) Americans. The discursive themes were written as a hypertext dialogue among researchers that had an ahistorical context—although the research documents dated from 1980-2003. There were four major discursive themes that emerged in the analysis that represented (Mexican) Americans through multiple research discourses. The themes under “Inscribing Mexican Americans/Hispanics as Educationally Lacking” and “Reinscribing Measurement with Discussions of Bias and Giftedness” appear to be more interrelated while the discursive theme on language materializes in each of the discursive themes including the social and psychological subject. The following summarizes the themes that emerged in Chapter IV using the postcolonial lens of alterity/Otherness. The discussion includes the multiple discourse methods that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans.

The primary mode of reference ascribed to (Mexican) Americans is that they are an educational *problem*—they have low academic achievement and have high dropout rates. The alterity/otherness of (Mexican) Americans as an educational *problem* has one major method that (re)produces this difference—measurement. Measurement via traditional achievement, intellectual, or state mandated tests *finds* a lack of achievement, giftedness, and most often *at risk* characteristics that predict the *problem*. Therefore, some researchers advocate alternative measures to improve the *problem* and reduce the *difference* that inherently compares to the white, middle class mythical subject(s). A second mechanism employed to (re)produce the educational alterity of (Mexican) Americans is the evaluation of the environment (the family and the schools) based on what are considered the ultimate experiential conditions for cognitive development. Researchers differ in the evaluation of the (Mexican) American family—some depict the parents as lacking (e.g. uneducated mothers) while others oppose such view by citing other *scientific findings*<sup>27</sup> where the (Mexican) American families are *found* to value and support their children’s education in diverse ways. Nevertheless, these opposing *scientific* views rely on social evaluation methods to differentiate what is considered good or inadequate experiences for children. In relation to the evaluation of schools, researchers converge on the view that (Mexican) American children attend schools that lack quality instruction and *cultural sensitivity*. The lack of cultural sensitivity is allocated primarily to white teachers as well as the curriculum and to a lesser degree to other educational practices such as formal and informal ability tracking. Interestingly,

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<sup>27</sup>The term *scientific* is used to denote that all arguments are based on research studies.

the discourse on cultural insensitivity is often referred as an educational *mismatch* between the home and school culture—hence, sanitizing the establishment of the dominant/traditional educational system from any social conflict and cultural oppression.

The counterpart to the representation of (Mexican) Americans as an educational *problem* is the alterity based on the ideology of children being *saved*. These children are believed to be delivered from their *problem* through the application of multiple educational formulas. In this research literature, the *problem* is solved by 1) training teachers on cultural diversity; 2) improving the quality of instruction; 3) changing classroom practices that accommodate the needs of minority groups; 4) enhancing parent-school collaboration; and 5) most importantly, identifying children *at risk* early in their academic careers so that schools may place or give the children *appropriate* academic/psychosocial interventions. The majority of these educational formulas target the environment of the child (the classroom, teachers, and parents). However, one educational formula targets the child—the identification of early educational problems. This formula designates a significant reliance on informal and formal measurement of *at risk* factors—thus, establishing the close relationship between the educational system and assessment/measurement. In conclusion, the alterity based on an educational *problem* has its corresponding alterity, that of a child saved by the solutions proposed by the educational research.

Another significant representation that constructs the alterity of (Mexican) Americans is language. Language difference has multiple terms of reference—Spanish Speaking, Limited English Proficient, second language learners, or English language

learners—that are mostly framed in relation to the dominant culture language. Furthermore, the research literature ascribes a central role to language in the education, measurement, as well as the psychological, and social subjectivity of (Mexican) Americans. The methods employed to construct alterity/Otherness based on language vary according to the topic.

For instance, the method used to (re) produce the alterity between monolinguals and second language learners is twofold. English monolinguals and second language learners share a similar developmental process in e.g. writing and reading. However, the difference between these children basically depends on ascribed educational *needs*—second language learners need instruction that integrates their funds of knowledge as well as modified classroom structures that gives them an opportunity for peer interaction. Hence, the alterity constructed about (Mexican) American second language learners depicts them as *similar* to other human beings yet different in their *educability*.

In the measurement discourse, the alterity of (Mexican) Americans based on language diversity simply represents a methodological *problem* to be solved. Improved or alternative measures improve the selection and identification of students into programs of special education or giftedness. The methods employed to differentiate language minorities in this case entails psychometric research to ensure fair and culturally reduced bias measurement. Therefore, the interface of language and assessment practices employ research itself to accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity.

The discourse on the psychological and social self depicts language differences based on its functional roles. Language has a central role in the formation of the social and psychological subject. Language is part of an ethnic identity that *inherently* identifies and unites a group of people. Consequently, language difference can serve as a form of social cohesion/resistance for ethnic groups. On the other hand, proficiency in the English language can serve as a mechanism for social mobility within the dominant culture. In reference to the psychological subject, language can create an internal conflict between the demands of two cultures resulting, for example, in acculturative stress. But as part of a social group, language can be a psychological buffer against prejudice and discrimination. Language can also affect the self-concept of this minority group both in positive or negative ways. In sum, language difference is presented within contradictory modes of reference in relation to the psychological and social self.

The alterity of (Mexican) Americans is represented continuously in relation to the dominant culture/norms. The primary method employed to delineate differences among cultural groups is the discursive placement/ordering of the Others (Mexican Americans) at the margins of social existence. In regards to education, the achievement of (Mexican) Americans has currently and historically been represented as less than the mythical white norm. The quality of instruction received by this minority group is substandard. The white teaching force is not adequately prepared to teach language minorities and (Mexican) Americans. Psychologically, (Mexican) Americans are *found* to have a self-concept or internal locus of control below or just *normal like whites* (but never above). In addition, they (as well as African-Americans) live in extreme

environmental conditions (poverty and/or violence) that trigger other psychological problems (e.g. peer victimization). In relation to the broader social environment, they acculturate to the *host* society. Furthermore, (Mexican) Americans living in this *host* society undergo internal (e.g. acculturative stress) as well as external social conflicts (e.g. social prejudice). Therefore, (Mexican) Americans in research discourse stand at the margins of what is normal—they cannot measure up, catch up, or be/stand above the dominant culture. In conclusion, the educational research perpetuates the dichotomy of whiteness/normativity and the Other/the different.

But how are these representations constructed? Who has the power/authority to study groups of people? Where is the knowledge about (Mexican) Americans produced? The second analysis examines the configurations of power/knowledge/culture to address these and other questions that critique the practice of Western research.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **PHASE II RESULTS**

Chapter V presents the analytical study of the relationship between power/knowledge/culture embedded in the educational literature. The method employed for this study is a discourse analysis via a Foucaultian approach (1970; 1972). There are two parts to Phase II. The first part examines the multiple conceptual frameworks that structure the educational discourse. The second part highlights the sites of power that (re)produce particular knowledge about (Mexican) Americans. Similar to the content analysis, the discourse analysis has a subjective component that allows for other possibilities of interpretation.

The conceptual frameworks that create (Mexican) Americans' alterity include the multiple philosophies layered within the educational discourses. It also highlights various forms of knowledge that count for and/or against them as well as the specific representation ascribed to (Mexican) Americans in the research design, implementation, and results. The second part of this analysis (the sites of power that construct minorities as objects) includes an analysis of the researcher, the places, and the funding sources that support the research projects. This part also looks at the various mechanisms that legitimize research discourses. Most importantly, this section highlights the alterity created about (Mexican) Americans as research objects. In sum, each section has a corresponding question and answer. At the end of Chapter V, a summary of the chapter results is provided.



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS THAT CREATE THE OTHER

### Question 1. Through What Philosophical Lens Are (Mexican) Americans Represented?

The philosophical lens used to represent (Mexican) Americans fall under three major themes. The first theme discusses the underlying premise that (Mexican) Americans can be known (researched) and that there are best ways to know (study) them. The second theme renders (Mexican) Americans as psychologically definable learners that have individual differences and a compartmentalized mind—that, in turn, compels particular educational instruction (e.g. metacognitive skills). The psychologically definable learner also includes the need to evaluate children early in their academic careers to assess for at risk factors and intervene appropriately. The last theme presents the philosophical perspective that frames the lives of (Mexican) Americans under the ideology of human adaptation as problem solving.

#### We Can “Know” the Under-Researched “Other”

The fundamental philosophy in the research literature is that the research subject can be known. Moreover, that there are better ways to know the ethnic “Other” and that research adds to the existing *body* of knowledge. Indeed, the philosophies surrounding research on (Mexican) Americans personify the practice of research. Research is discussed in terms of a *growing body* of knowledge, scientific evidence, or literature.

As a starting point, a growing body of literature seeks to understand how children perceive differences among groups, and how these perceptions change over the course of development and across communities with different levels of cross-racial contact (Hudley et al., 2000, p. 4).

Research is seen as an active *body* that *explores* and *discovers*.

Hence, for the present study, the ideas of 4<sup>th</sup>-and 5<sup>th</sup> grade children (9 and 10 years old) were explored—that is, children who have some understanding of their ethnicity (Okagaki et al. 1996, p. 471).

It seeks to *understand* life complexities and human differences.

A focus on writers' purposes in research on literacy would contribute to a better understanding of what literacy means to the students and what functions it served them (Galindo, 1993, p. 72).

This *body* of knowledge *sheds light* by revealing both the process and the product of human behavior.

Specifically, we hoped to shed some light on these questions by looking at developmental changes in children's reliance on *ser*, *estar*, and *to be* in drawing inferences about the stability of psychological characteristics (Heyman & Diesendruck, 2002, p. 409).

It also provides *insight* into the casual links of complex human behavior and conditions—For example, the influence parents have on the education and the development of ethnic identity. Therefore, research can explain reality (e.g. the relationship between cognition and bilingualism), predict behavior (e.g. potential dropouts) and solve social problems (e.g. the underachievement of (Mexican) Americans). What is more, the explicit intention of researchers is to extend, contribute to, and expand to the different *bodies* of knowledge (e.g. reading research) in relation to the *under-* researched minority groups like (Mexican) Americans.

This study extended existing research on the impact of economic hardship and stress on family and child functioning by focusing on a predominantly low-income, ethnically diverse sample of families (Mistry, Vandewater, Huston, McLoyd, 2002, p. 947).

This study can be added to the growing body of positive research investigating this area of critical concern (Medina & V.de la Garza, 1989, p. 123).

The educational literature suggests that research on minorities is best practiced when the following methods are incorporated in the research endeavor. First, the research project should consider “context”. This includes the macro environmental factors (e.g. politics, history) and micro environmental factors (e.g. the physical and social structures in a classroom).

the goal was to better understand language learning in the classroom, but our experiences in schools, our past research and our theoretical understandings had led us to believe that what goes on in the classroom cannot be understood apart from the larger contexts within which students and teachers live their daily lives (Hansen, 1989, p.171).

Thus, the question of self-esteem in relation to dropping out of high school remains largely unanswered until further research has been completed from a multidimensional perspective (Hess & D’Amato, 1996, p. 357).

Secondly, it is best to research minority groups in naturalistic environments or real life situations such as the school or the peer group context.

In any case, it is important to identify the nature of naturally occurring classrooms rather than to rely on assumptions about these classrooms if we are to develop empirically based theories concerning the influence of the classroom environment upon children (Gumbiner et al., 1981, p.34).

The naturalistic approach also entails that research subjects should be given natural tasks (e.g. Rodriguez, 1981). Third, it is proposed that research should utilize process-oriented models to study minority groups. As Mistry et al., (2002) comment,

Social science researchers are becoming more appreciative of the fact that parenting is a complex and reciprocal construct, and they are beginning to move toward more process-orienting models of parenting (p. 948).

Fourth, research needs to consider that there is variability in school communities, teachers, families, and individuals. This idea that there is variability among and within groups is also seen in learning philosophies discussed in the next section.

In summary, the underlying philosophical assumption about research is that it has a practical purpose. For example, educational research is utilized for diagnosis (e.g. reading difficulties), identification (e.g. giftedness), instructional design (e.g. based on learning styles), or educational policy. Research conducted on minority group subjects is best practiced when the process and context are considered. Overall, the philosophy that represents (Mexican) Americans aims to contribute to the *body* of Western knowledge.

### **(Mexican) Americans as Psychologically Definable Learners**

**Educational Philosophies.** There are multiple philosophies that underlie the education of (Mexican) Americans. The first set of philosophies reflects a constructivist approach to learning that influence what is considered the best educational practice. However, most of the assumptions underlying these educational philosophies hold a psychological foundation—e.g. there are individual differences, cognition can be measured and known, and early schooling experiences determine later life outcomes. In a sense, these philosophies represent (Mexican) Americans as psychologically definable learners. The following sections discuss, in more detail, the philosophical lens used to represent (Mexican) Americans.

The general educational philosophy that represents (Mexican) Americans centers mainly on a constructivist learning theory. For example, learning tasks should have authenticity and appeal to a child's interest,

Writing instruction should follow a whole language perspective which emphasizes use of authentic (student chosen) topics for real audiences and authentic texts for reading (Hudelson, 1989 cited in Kuhlman et al., 1993, p. 47).

In turn, authentic learning entails that the curriculum be based on real life application.

Underlying the work follows is the belief that disaffected minority learners need to claim both authority and identity in the school arena, and that the more this authority and identity can be linked to schooling and school tasks, the greater the chances are for win-win outcomes—teachers with responsive and engaged students and students with a love of learning who perceive the relevance of school and the tasks of school to their lives (Bean, 1997, p. 53).

Learning is viewed as an active process of knowledge and inquiry skill acquisition (e.g. metacognitive skills) not a passive transmission of knowledge (e.g. Frontera & Horowitz, 1995; Gibbons, 2003). Additionally, the view that learning is a socially mediated process is particularly salient on literacy development.

In addition to these insights from previous research, this study highlights the need to also take into consideration minority children's participation in peer-culture as a specific sub-culture that can impact how they interpret literary events (Galindo, 1993, p. 94).

Thus, the development of literacy is considered a sociocognitive process that draws from the immediate context (e.g. the classroom and teacher-student interactions) (e.g. Kuhlman et al., 1993).

Another major philosophical assumption made about learning is based on individual differences (in the learner). A recurring assumption appears in the literature as researchers note that individual learner differences exist—e.g. “developmental researchers have further noted the variability in individual's skills across contexts (Saxe, 1988, cited in Gutierrez, 1992, p.246). This assumption is reflected in the differences attributed to children's mental/cognitive abilities described by researchers as low and high achievers, gifted and nongifted, or children with sociocognitive deficits. Similarly, individual differences are discussed in terms of motivation (e.g. August, 1987) and

aggressive behavioral patterns (e.g. Samples & CSR, 1997). In all, the philosophical perspective that states there is variability of talent, cognitive abilities, and behavior simply describes human diversity.

There are other particular philosophical learning assumptions presented in the educational literature. However, most of these discuss how learning is affected by other factors. For example, the most frequent assumption made is that learning is affected by language--that there is a close relationship between language and cognition<sup>28</sup>. Another assumption is that there are classroom factors (e.g. behavior management) that can hinder or facilitate learning. For instance, the social structure of the classroom can affect learning (e.g. competitive vs. collaborative orientations) (e.g. Gumbiner et al., 1981). Moreover, learning is affected by the physical space and other environmental factors (e.g. temperature of the room or the lighting) (e.g. Dunn et al., 1993). Beyond the classroom, one of the most common premises is that parents have an effect on children's achievement<sup>29</sup>. In addition, parents are described as having a major role in the education of children since they are given the responsibility of preparing children to enter school and help them throughout their formal schooling years.

For minority groups like (Mexican)-Americans, there are specific assumptions created about the best educational practices that lead to effective learning. As previously mentioned in Chapter IV, it seems that researchers deem the use of the children's background/*funds of knowledge* and the *match* between the instruction and

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<sup>28</sup> This was a specific philosophical approach that was previously discussed in Chapter IV, p. 134-135.

<sup>29</sup> This was discussed in Chapter IV, p.104-108.

learning/cognitive styles as major components of effective learning. Cooperative classroom structures have also been highly suggested, especially for minority groups.

Cooperative learning strategies hold one possible instructional solution to the meeting needs of language minority students (Rosales-Kruffin, 1991, p. 13).

Experiential learning and concrete learning experiences are believed to be the best approach to teach minority groups (e.g. Cruz & Walker, 2001). It is also assumed that successful learning entails instruction that promotes academic engagement or active learning (e.g. Arreaga-Mayer et al., 2003).

In addition, it seems that there are also assumptions about what (Mexican) American children should be learning. Foremost, the shared view is that minority children should be learning and applying higher order thinking skills in all academic areas.

The challenge for educators, then, is to create environments in the schools that are conducive to language learning and the development of intellectual skills (Rodriguez & Bethel, 1983, p.292).

Minority should also be learning problem-solving skills which are considered part of the higher order thinking skills. Teaching children these skills also involves the development of metacognitive skills.

First success in problem solving depends not only on the nature of the task but also on the cognitive processing of the learner and on the teacher's ability to improve his processing (Cardelle-Elawar, 1990, p. 174).

It is also suggested that minority children like (Mexican) Americans need to learn social skills,

Success in school and beyond hinges not only on academic ability, but also on being able to navigate successfully in social situations, conform to rules, and work independently (Mistry et al., 2002, p. 947).

A major philosophical assumption emerged reflecting the broader social view of education. This philosophical perspective assumes that the purpose of education is to prepare children for the labor force. In particular, schools are supposed to educate children for an increasingly demanding and “competitive technological society” (Gunn, et al., 2000, p. 90). The role of schools is to increase the “quality” of the labor force (Ima & Labovitz, 1991, p. 4) by teaching children not only technical skills (reading and computer literacy), but also citizenship skills of cooperation or competition that will be carried into the work place (Gumbiner et al., 1981).

Furthermore, there are some researchers that hold the premise that education can solve multiple social problems.

If African-American, Latino, and other minority students performed in school at the same level as Whites, the broad social impact would be profound, almost certainly affecting the socioeconomic status of minority individuals, college admissions, and ultimately segregation, prejudice, and racial tension (Slavin & Madden, 2001, p. 4).

Other broad, underlying assumptions about education mentioned in the literature include the notion that schools should foster ethics of care where there is dignity and support for the development of people and communities (e.g. Beck, Kratzer, & Annisken, 1997).

Another of the key educational philosophies used to represent (Mexican) Americans is the concept of opportunity. McLaughlin and Shepard (1995) believe that standard-based education needs to incorporate “opportunity-to-learn standards” (resources, programs, educational facilities, and quality teaching force) in large-scale assessment (cited in Escamilla et al., 2003, p. 47). Similarly, individualized assessment should ensure “equal opportunity for placement and selection” (Mishra, 1983, p. 442).



Other researchers believe that access to quality educational opportunities is critical for the improvement of educational success for Latino students (e.g. Beaumont et al., 2002). The principle of opportunity is also reflected in the need to allow the diverse expressions of giftedness and leadership among minority children (e.g. Riojas-Clark & Gonzalez, 1998). It is also assumed that all children should have the opportunity for meaningful interracial contact—“children must be afforded the opportunities to play, socialize, and freely associate with those who are different than themselves” (Cruz & Walker, 2001, p. 14). This implies that schools should be the primary sites for social integration. Moreover, it is also suggested that children should be given the opportunity meaningful interaction with their peers in order to facilitate academic learning, language development and social skills (e.g. Prados-Olmos et al., 1991). Lastly, children should be given the opportunity to become bilingual.

They were learning English, but they were not losing Spanish. In fact, the majority of the children, regardless of gender, were developing increasing proficiency in Spanish as well as English. It may be that providing the opportunity to become bilingual is the most significant outcome of an additive MBE program (Medina & Escamilla, 1994, p.435).

In sum, the educational philosophies representing (Mexican) Americans establish a normative structure on what children should be learning and how children should be learning. The deeper educational philosophy surrounding (Mexican) Americans is structured by the ideology of educational opportunity.

**Early Life Experiences.** One of the most common philosophical assumptions found in the educational literature is the premise that early life experiences can determine the later life of individuals. For instance, early academic experiences shape

secondary school performance (Entwisle & Hayderk, 1988 cited in Baca et al., 1989, p. 21). Similarly, negative life events can contribute to later psychological problems in children such as depression and anxiety (e.g. Attar et al., 1994). This assumption is also reflected in research that “suggests that there is a linear progression in aggressive behavior” (Petterson, 1992 cited in Hudley, 1995, p.4). However, the counterpart to this assumption is that human behavior is mutable. The notion that human behavior can be changed is best exemplified by supplemental/remedial programs or psychosocial interventions. Yet, this support for intervention is relative given that there is also the research perspective that holds that there are critical windows for learning—especially for reading (e.g. Frontera & Horowitz, 1995).

Given the relatively brief window of time available to teach children basic reading skills (Allington, 1984; Francis et al. 1996; Kameenui, 1993) and the inconsistency of the instructional approaches used by classroom teachers, supplemental instruction grounded in research is a viable strategy to ensure reading success (Gunn et al. 2000, p. 91).

Thus, even the idea that human behavior is changeable implicitly adheres to a developmental framework.

The assumption, that early life experiences build the foundation of later life, has a developmental framework that inherently implies the principles of linearity and progression. The ethnic development of (Mexican) Americans is a primary example of the developmental framework. This assumption is also evident across the different research studies that adhere to a sociocognitive developmental framework used to study, for example, the differences between children versus adult reasoning (e.g. Heyman & Diesendruck, 2002), worry content (e.g. Silverman et al., 1995), interpersonal

negotiation strategies (e.g. Samples & CSR, 1997), or media behavior (e.g. Greenberg & Heeter, 1983). It is worthy of note that there are a few researchers that do not assume that there is an invariant sequence (order) to development or that developmental timetables are consistent across ethnic groups. Children's writing development is not "fixed nor necessarily sequential" (Dyson, 1986; Graves, 1981 cited in Kuhlman et al., 1993, p. 6). Others also assume that the rate of development is dependent on environment/context—e.g. differential rates in moral reasoning (Cortese, 1982) or racial understanding (Hudley et al., 2000) are due to cultural and environmental factors. Hence, within the philosophical view that the early years are important and that humans are imbedded in developmental stages (with different timetables) lies the assumption that environment shapes human existence. As repeatedly stated, parents are believed to greatly influence children's education. The discourse on literacy development places great importance on the home environment for emergent reading in preschoolers and homework.

In addition, social economic status is believed to have a significant impact on children's cognitive development.

Children from low SES backgrounds tend to have comparably lower verbal intelligence (Bouchard & Segal, 1985) and difficulty in acquiring linguistic skills because of more limited environmental opportunity to engage in verbal expression (Bowey, 1995; Scott & Seifert, 1975 cited in Garcia & Stafford, 2000, p. 232).

Other studies have indicated that an urban or rural environment may affect cognitive development (Greenfield, 1966) and that socioeconomic status may affect the rates of development (Almy, Chittenden, & Miller, 1966 cited in Saito-Horgan, 1995, p.5).

But not only does environment influence cognitive growth, the environment also molds social identities. For instance, the discourse on acculturation of (Mexican) Americans has the underlying framework that children's identity is molded by two environments—the ethnic culture and the mainstream culture.

In sum, although there are some researchers that do not presuppose linearity, learning timetables, or invariant sequence of stages, the majority of the researchers in this educational literature do assume a sociocognitive developmental framework and believe that environmental factors impact children's identity and learning outcomes.

**The Human Mind.** The philosophical assumptions about the mind/cognition provide the foundations of learning theory and educational practice. They hold an essentialist perspective that views cognition as a product (IQ) and a process (cognitive development or elemental information process). The mind is also a physical space in the body—in the traditional view on intellectual ability and the information processing approach, the mind has a location in the brain. Regardless of the approach used to measure cognition, one of the underlying principles is that the mind can be compartmentalized into different abilities or components.

In the information processing approach, researchers attempt to analyze responses in terms of basic component processes that underlie them. For example, information-processing begins with the working memory system while analytical processes are performed (Saccuzzo et al. 1994, p. 105).

The taxonomy of higher order thinking skills also illustrates the division of cognitive processes. The traditional Piagetian view on cognitive development also compartmentalizes *thinking* into concrete and abstract learning. The second underlying assumption is that the mind/cognition can be measured. The product of the mind can be

measured by traditional or alternative intellectual measures (e.g. Mishra, 1984; Sandoval, 1982; Valencia, 1984a/b). In addition, adequate cognitive measurement of minorities and second language learners is presumed to be a matter of constructing *fair* instrumentation (e.g. Rodriguez, 1989) and establishing an equitable standard based school assessment (e.g. Escamilla et al., 2003).

The philosophical view of the human mind also includes the assumption that the mind can be compartmentalized into conscious and unconscious components. For example, the discourse on metacognition requires that the individual have an awareness of his thinking process. Researchers also refer to knowledge of the self and others in terms of ethnic awareness or awareness of social norms (e.g. Rotherham-Borus & Phinney, 1990, p. 554). On the other hand, there are unconscious mental processes—e.g. such as choosing a language (Spanish or English) for a particular social setting that can be often be “unconscious and spontaneous” (Smith, 1999, p. 279). The notion of awareness itself implies the dichotomy that there is a mental/cognitive state where there is lack of or presence of awareness. Additionally, when the assumption of consciousness/unconsciousness intersects with the philosophical perspective that humans undergo development, the broader philosophical premise is that humans grow into awareness/consciousness and that there is a mental structural growth that allows children to become more conscious/ aware and that is with increasing age, children reach higher levels of thinking and reasoning. In sum, the assumption constructed on the mind is based on a dichotomous philosophy.

### **To Live Is to Problem Solve and Adapt**

The educational literature is embedded in the philosophical view that life entails a process of problem solving. In the broadest sense, the educational literature itself represents this ideology—there is *problem* (underachievement) that research is actively seeking to solve by gathering information and then creating solutions (educational formulas). At the individual level, the skill of problem-solving differentiates among gifted and nongifted students. “Effective thinkers” are characterized as children that are able to solve problems (Gil-Garcia & Canizalez, 2001, p. 9). Gifted children “understand problems and discover solutions using the most efficient methods” that is “creatively and efficiently” (Maker, 1993; 1996 cited in Sarouphim, 2000, p. 5). As mentioned previously, problem-solving is considered to be one of the main skills minority children need to learn. In the broader social perspective, problem solving manifests part of the process of human psychosocial adaptation (e.g. Silverman et al. 1995; Chavez et al., 1997). Effective problem-solving is also viewed as a method to dissolve multicultural conflict (e.g. Rein & Schön, 1977 cited in Birch & Ferrin, 2002, p. 76-77). In sum, this philosophical view is expressed through various discursive levels. Problem-solving is viewed as: 1) one of the goals of research; 2) an ability of the gifted; 3) it is a skill that can and needs to be learned by children; 4) part of the process of adaptation, and 5) an effective mechanism to solve social conflict.

The ideology of adaptation stands as another major philosophical structure that attempts to describe human existence. For (Mexican) Americans families, adaptation is reflected under the discourse of acculturation,

ethnic minorities in this country undergo a process of psychosocial adaptation that is inherently fraught with conflicts arising from differences between traditional and dominant cultural norms (Chavez et al., 1997, p. 40-41).

There are some researchers that consider bilingualism and biculturalism to be a valuable and ideal adaptive cultural strategy (e.g. Rotherham-Borus & Phinney, 1990; Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). In addition, adaptation is projected to the family unit. Children learn coping strategies and become prepared to survive the demands of the world (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Rivas, 1984). The process of adaptation is assumed to be present in the daily lives of families as they balance their resources as well as cultural values, beliefs, and needs (Gallimore, Weisner, Kaufman & Bernheimer, 1989 cited in Arzubagi, et al., 2002, p. 235). When the ideology of adaptation is projected at the individual level, human behavior is assumed to have a positive and negative value. For example, children that live in “extreme environmental conditions” (poverty, unemployment, limited resources, substandard housing, and high crime rates) are measured by indices of maladjustment such as stress, depression, or aggression (e.g. Attar et al., 1994, p. 398). Moreover, a value system is also in place for the environment where the adaptation is taking place—whether it is a disadvantaged neighborhood or a highly demanding urban environment.

In conclusion, the ideology of adaptation underlies the discourse of family socialization. It has a value system that inherently makes a social judgment about the different kinds of human environment as well as whether behavior is adaptive or maladaptive. Moreover, humans are viewed as beings that are in constant adaptation and

problem solving. Those that adapt the best seemed to be endowed with an ability to solve problems creatively and effectively.

### **Question 1 Summary**

The educational literature presented three major themes that philosophically represent (Mexican) Americans. The first theme is that, through research, the subjects of analysis can be known. The philosophical perspective on what constitutes research and how research on minority groups should be best practiced assumes that it has a beneficial educational purpose. The second theme presents multiple philosophies that delineate (Mexican) Americans learners as psychologically definable. These educational philosophies converge on the notion that there are fundamental educational elements that should be incorporated into the schooling of (Mexican) Americans (e.g. higher order thinking skills). Moreover, construction of the human mind to a great extent sustains the educational discourses on learning and assessment. It is also held that the purpose of education is to prepare children for a technological society. From a broader philosophical perspective, human development and adaptation emerges as the primary axis used to interpret human behavior. In essence, human survival requires the existence of adverse conditions where individuals learn coping strategies and problem-solving as part of the adaptive mechanism needed to live in two cultures.

### **Question 2. How Are Forms of Knowledge Associated with and/or Against (Mexican) Americans?**

In this particular educational literature, four major themes (law, numerical representation, teacher education, and history) emerge that represent forms of knowledge



associated with and/or against (Mexican) Americans. These systems of knowledge contain different kinds of *power/authority*. The law has the *power* to protect while numerical representation and history have the *power* to define groups of people. On the other hand, teacher education has the *power* to reform educational practice. In all, these themes converge on the idea that (Mexican) Americans must be given an equal educational opportunity.

### **The Law**

The Law, as a system of knowledge, has the *power/authority* to protect minority groups by establishing legal mandates that change educational practices. In the research literature, three particular educational changes are linked to laws and/or key cases in assessment, bilingual education, and school desegregation (Table 1). The primary purpose of these laws/cases is to ensure equal educational opportunities. Thus, the law stands as one of the main forms of knowledge associated with (Mexican) Americans. These issues are briefly discussed in association with each law/case to provide an example of the kind of power that forms around this institutionalized knowledge system.

A significant portion of the educational research literature concentrates on assessment and the validation of standardized and alternative measures<sup>30</sup>. Discussions about the sociohistorical legal movement against discriminatory assessment of minority groups are embedded in the assessment discourse. Pivotal cases (Larry P. vs. Wilson Riles) and federal law (P.L. 94-142/IDEA 1997) are referenced to represent the legal protection granted to minority groups against unfair assessment practices (e.g. Sandoval,

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<sup>30</sup> Twenty-one documents specifically conducted studies on assessment (e.g. psychometric properties).

1982; Valencia, 1984a/b). However, the litigation established to ensure adequate assessment practices among minority groups is narrowed to the evaluation of test fairness in cognitive measures.

In relation to linguistic minority groups, the educational discourse touches upon other cases and laws that reflect the protection against unfair assessment, as well as, the requirement that schools need to provide special language programs to assist second language learners. For example, the case of *Lau versus Nichols, 1975* ruled that assessment with linguistic minorities should be conducted by persons who speak the child's native language and that under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, school districts are compelled to provide language programs for the linguistic minorities to ensure an equal opportunity to an education (Rodriguez, 1989, p. 5)

Furthermore, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1964 is referenced to note the federal government's acknowledgement that other languages other than English exist—that the United States is a multilingual country (Benjamin, 1997). However, this law epitomizes and reiterates the sociopolitical struggle surrounding bilingual education. It demonstrates the failure of the federal government to financially support BEA (Title VII)—“with each passing year and each presidential administration the funding for the BEA (Title VI)” decreases (Ruiz, 1995 cited in Smith, 1999, p. 269). Moreover, the provision of bilingual programs illustrates the political wave that, at the surface, seems to be concerned about *how to best educate linguistic minority groups* as in the case of Proposition 227 in state of California (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002, p. 376). Thus, on one hand, linguistic minorities have protection against discriminatory assessment, but the

sociopolitical push from the English-only interest groups and the lack of program funding seems to neutralize the authority/weight of the Bilingual Education Act (1964).

In addition, the ruling against educational segregation is revisited in the educational discourse often citing the *Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954* case. The case appears as a constant reminder that racial divisions have been (and are) part of society (Quintana & Vera, 1999) and that this is the outcome of historical social change (i.e. Civil Rights Movements) that affects the education of children. However, when the law against segregation is specifically discussed in relation to (Mexican) Americans, it provides an important example of how the application of the law can count against (Mexican) Americans. For example, the ruling to end school segregation based on *Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954* failed to *apply* to schools attended by Latino students until two decades later when (Mexican) Americans pressed for formal legal recognition to desegregate their schools (Acuña, 1981 cited in Moore, 1988, p. 518)<sup>31</sup>. Admittedly, the issue of school desegregation is much more complex; nonetheless, the historical and current analysis of school segregation found in the educational literature serves as an example of how the law works with and/or against (Mexican) Americans.

To conclude, given that the laws mentioned in the literature, for the most part, come from Supreme Court decisions, they inherently place *authority* to the written word/legal mandates that intend to protect (Mexican) Americans from discriminatory assessment and, consequently, an equal opportunity in education. In the case of school segregation, the *authority* of the law is evident as it has the *power* to define and

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<sup>31</sup> However, the litigation against school segregation by the (Mexican) American community began in the 1950's (refer to Chapter II, p. 38-44).

acknowledge a group of individuals. In the application of the law, an implicit trust is granted to educators and other school administrators to make the appropriate decisions and enforce the law accordingly.

### **Numerical Representation**

Numerical representation stands as another form of knowledge that constructs the alterity of (Mexican) Americans (Table 2). Numerical representation includes how research subjects are represented in the results (statistical tables/figures) as well as what numerical information is provided about the group (demographics and educational outcomes). Numerical representation appears to derive *power/authority* in various ways depending on how the numbers are interpreted in this case by authors/researchers. The following section provides an example of how demographic data that can be used for and against minorities and how educational outcomes, present for the majority of the case, a form of knowledge that counts against minorities.

Demographic data presents a particular case where numbers can be used for and against (Mexican) Americans. The association for/against depends on the kind of demographic data discussed and how it is interpreted. Data on the demographic shifts showing an increase of the Hispanic population appears to have positive association when it is used implicitly to make a statement that this population can no longer be ignored. Similarly, some researchers interpret an increase in the number of second language learners in the schools as a positive trend toward enriching the diversity of schools (e.g. Prados-Olmos et al., 1991). In contrast, demographic data documenting poverty rates places (Mexican) American immigrants as a “especially vulnerable” group

affected by the perils of low socioeconomic status (Layendecker & Lamb, 1989 cited in Mistry et al., 2002, p. 36) and urban living (Attar et al., 1994). Moreover, the high birth rate of the Hispanic population is viewed as a social *problem* since they (along with African Americans) are more likely to do poorly in schools (Paulu, 1987 cited in Dunn et al., 1990, p. 68).

Numerical representation is also instituted in the educational outcomes of (Mexican) Americans. As previously discussed in Chapter IV, the discourse on measurement of academic performance reflected in e.g. school report cards, dropout rates, achievement gap, depict the major educational *problem* ascribed to (Mexican) Americans and other Latino students. However, the data on educational outcomes requires a platform that converts numbers into representations—and the media is one important source of dissemination that can count for/against students and schools. This was the case when Escamilla et al. (2003) criticized the media for failing to provide accurate information on the state accountability results,

In October 1999, the *Denver Post* called for a restructuring of Vigil Elementary because of the school's abysmal results on the CSAP. In 1999, only 14% of the students at Vigil Elementary scored at or above proficient on the English CSAP. However, the *Denver Post* failed to look at the school's Spanish CSAP results, in which 62% of the students scored at or above proficient (p. 36).

Other researchers also condemned the media attacks on bilingual education (e.g. Rodriguez, 1981) as well as the faulty interpretation of standardized test performances (e.g. Ima & Eugene, 1991).

To conclude, it *seems*<sup>32</sup> that the data itself stands on a neutral ground and the difference as to whether it counts with and or against stands in how the numbers are manipulated and interpreted, in this case, by researchers and the media.

### **Teacher Education**

In the research literature, teachers represent a system (teaching education) that has not typically been adequately prepared to teach the linguistically and culturally diverse student population. The implication made is that not only does this impact the education of minorities, but it also brings attention to how teachers are being trained by the colleges of education and how student-teachers are embedded in differential *power/authority* relationships. The following provides a brief overview of how the teaching force reflects not necessarily a form of knowledge, but a system that fails to provide equal treatment to (Mexican) Americans.

Teachers were previously ascribed to a position of blame for the miseducation of (Mexican) Americans.<sup>33</sup> This claim was partly based on what seemed to come from the investigation by the United States Commission of Civil Rights (1973) which reported the differential treatment given to (Mexican) Americans by Anglo teachers (cited in Machida, 1986, p. 455). The phenomenon that Anglo teachers had lower expectations for (Mexican) Americans and other minority groups was reiterated in other research studies,

Luis Laosa (1977) replicated earlier research on teacher expectations and found that teachers generally viewed Mexican-American elementary students less positively than Anglo students (cited in Moore, 1988, p. 519).

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<sup>32</sup> However, what counts as data can also be a source of philosophical and methodological debate.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 108-109.

Moreover, it was *found* that both Anglo and (Mexican) American teachers “significantly underpraised and under-encouraged Chicano children” (US Commission of Civil Rights, 1973 cited in Figueroa & Gallegos, 1980, p. 22),

Children from Mexican ancestry had previously been consistently rated as less academically able and lower achieving than their Anglo counterparts, even by their Hispanic teachers (e.g. Coates, 1972; Figueroa & Gallegos, 1978; Jensen & Rosenfeld, 1974) (cited in Machida, 1986, p. 462).

The fact that both minority and non-minority teachers were *found* to treat (Mexican) American differently demonstrates that the issue of unequal education is not exclusively an issue of race/ethnicity, but an issue that extends to include social class and gender inequalities.

Jackson (1968), in his book *Life in the Classroom*, concluded that life in the same classroom can be vastly different for different students. Supporting Jackson’s conclusion, several researchers have found that students differing in social class (Rist, 1970), racial and ethnic identity (Jackson & Cosca, 1974; Leacock, 1969), and sex (Felsenthal, Note 1) are perceived and treated differently by teachers(cited in Elliot & Argulewicz, 1983, p.338).

Thus, the teaching force represents a group of individuals trained under a system of knowledge (colleges of education) that, in the *eyes* of research, has historically treated minority groups like (Mexican) American students different than white children. The implication is that colleges of education be held responsible to train a *culturally sensitive* teaching force.

Although educators verbalize that all children, regardless of age, race, or religion have an equal right to effective education, they have not realized the extent to which ethnic and cultural differences influence learning and achievement (Dunn et al., 1990, p. 69).

A second implication is that teachers are held accountable to provide equal educational opportunities,

Elementary science teachers must ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in the classroom...A challenge for teachers is to overcome the experiential, societal, and cultural factors that may prevent those groups from experiencing success in the science classroom (Gibbons, 2003, p. 373).

In sum, the research on the unequal treatment given by teachers also demonstrates the differential *power* inherent in the interaction and relationship between students and teachers—as well as the responsibility of teachers to reexamine their unequal educational practices.

### History

History provides another form of institutionalized knowledge that supports the plea of (Mexican) Americans students for *an opportunity* to an equal education. In general, history, as a form of knowledge, holds *authority/power* that legitimizes narratives about particular events. However, research also creates history by documenting unequal educational practices. In this case, the *authority/power* is established under the structures of what counts as valid/trustworthy research.

History, as a form of knowledge that advocates on behalf of (Mexican) Americans, is found in the research literature. For example, several researchers revisited the historical accounts of the unequal educational practices that (Mexican) Americans students experienced during the last century. For instance, the research documents contain historical accounts of the school segregation (e.g. Moore, 1988), language loss and assimilationist agendas (e.g. Smith, 1999), discrimination in assessment (e.g. Mishra, 1981b), as well as social prejudice and racism (e.g. Benjamin, 1996). These



historical accounts embedded in the research documents already have been given *authority/power* that what happened is legitimate and can be referenced as history.

On the other hand, research studies indirectly contribute to history. Researchers examined and documented current unequal educational practices in schools (e.g. Benjamin, 1997; Escamilla et al., 2003). For example, in regards to literacy instruction researchers stated the following:

In these studies, as well as my own study, it is the case that certain kinds of writing process instruction deny many students the opportunity to learn fundamental literacy skills that many mainstream students already bring into the classroom—that writing process instruction privileges particular kinds of students (Gutierrez, 1992, p. 260).

This difference may be attributed to whether children had had exposure to writing in kindergarten and/or pre-school. In fact, most of the Spanish speaking children's kindergarten experience focused on oral language (English) and not on writing skills (Kuhlman et al., 1993, p. 55).

In relation to school resources, some researchers also document inequality,

Clearly, African Americans and Latinos, on average, attend schools that are far less well funded than those attended by Whites, their teachers are less highly qualified, and their families are more likely to suffer from the ills of poverty, which have a direct bearing on children's success in school (Slavin & Madden, 2001, p. 6).

For now it seems as if the current CSAP testing and reporting system has been designed to punish, rather than support schools and school districts with large numbers of ELLs. Clearly some schools and districts face greater challenges than others. They need additional resources and more attention, not castigation (Escamilla et al., 2003, p. 47).

To conclude, history, as a form of knowledge, holds significant *power* to document unequal educational practices and to give indirect testimony<sup>34</sup> to the educational

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<sup>34</sup> It is an indirect testimony because with the exception of one research document (Smith, 1999), the research documents interpret and give voice to the research subjects.

experiences of (Mexican) Americans. Research, on the other hand, has the *power* to contribute to history by documenting the past and present lack of educational equality experienced by (Mexican) Americans.

### Question 2 Summary

The forms of knowledge found in the Law and Numerical Representation can be considered with and/or against the Latino population. The teaching education, as a system of knowledge, definitely has a negative association to (Mexican) Americans. In contrast, history serves as significant form of knowledge that makes a plea on behalf of (Mexican) Americans for an opportunity to equal education. Furthermore, the abovementioned forms of knowledge converge on the ideology that (Mexican) Americans have the right to an equal education. This ideology creates a space of *power* for researchers to discuss multiple issues related to the lack of educational opportunity. The space of *authority/power* is the written word. Furthermore, these forms of knowledge point toward the institutionalization of these knowledges which hold various types of *authoritative power* to protect (the Law), to define (history and numerical representations) and to *call for a reform* (the teaching force and education). Each form of knowledge, in turn, reflects other *inner workings of power* associated with the education of (Mexican) Americans—e.g. legal mandates against discriminatory assessment, the places of implementation (schools and classrooms), the people who implement and enforce the law. To conclude, this section attempts to delineate the most predominant forms of knowledge associated for/against (Mexican) Americans.

### **Question 3. How Are (Mexican) Americans Represented in Research Design, Implementation, and Results?**

The representation of Mexican-Americans in the research document contain social, spatial, and comparative structures that demonstrate the *authority/power* of the researcher to make decisions about where the research takes place, what information is included about the research subject/culture, and how the research is designed. The researcher also has the *power/authority* to determine how results are presented and interpreted. Therefore, the researcher's *authority/power* as author is emphasized by this question. The section begins by providing the broad representations found in the two research approaches (quantitative and/or qualitative) employed by the research documents. Next, the social, spatial, and comparative research representations that emerged from these studies are described. Lastly, an analysis of these representations is provided to summarize the *power/authority* configurations embedded in this section.

#### **Representing Groups of Human Beings with Numbers and Categories**

**Quantitative Research.** The majority of the research documents used quantitative methods to study (Mexican) Americans/Latinos (Table 3). There was a significant amount of numerical representation in the research design, implementation, and results. Inferential statistics were used to analyze the majority of the research documents (a few had descriptive statistics only); this is illustrated by the high number of tables and technical explanation of the results (Table 2). What is relevant to this analysis is the extensive use of numeric representation to interpret (Mexican) American children behavior/humanity. Furthermore, the research documents that utilized mixed

methods seem to impose a hierarchical structure on research methods—that is, only quantitative results were discussed as part of the results (e.g. Arzubiaga et al., 2002; Moore, 1988). In sum, in quantitative research, the *reality* of (Mexican) American children is measured, *tabled*, and interpreted through numbers. Thus, this system of numerology and probability has been constructed to have significant *authority/power* to categorize, interpret, and predict human behavior.

**Qualitative Research.** Expectedly, quantitative research provided rich historical and/or contextual data. Also, although this research approach utilized various data collection methods that allowed the direct voice of research subjects, it must be noted that it was the *voice* of adults and the *observed* conversations of children that had a *place* in the implementation of the research study—not the *voice* and self-interpretation of children. Therefore, it was the researcher(s)’s interpretation of *reality* that became translated into the categorical conclusions. Qualitative research has a different epistemological perspective on how to legitimize research and does not claim *objectivity*; nonetheless, *authority/power* is still granted to the researcher(s) as *author* of *truth* or *interpretation* which is not necessarily numerical but categorical.

### **Social, Spatial, and Comparative Representations**

There are specific representations of (Mexican) Americans in the educational research. The first set of research structures mostly entails broad social markers. The second set of research structures consists of the *spatial*/physical structures employed in research that provide information on the context of the study. The third structure involves the use the comparative framework to research (Mexican) Americans.

There are four main social structures employed to differentiate between and within ethnic groups. These structures are: language, socioeconomic status, generational status, and parental level of education (Table 4). Approximately, 61.3 % of the research documents reported the primary/home language, degree of bilingualism, or English/Spanish language proficiency of research subjects. Seventy-five (63%) of the research documents provided information on the socioeconomic status of the research subjects, family, or community. From the seventy-five research documents, 73 % (55 documents) corresponded to a low-income level, 6.6% (5 documents) to middle-income, 16 % (12 documents) to low and middle income level, 1.3% to middle and upper income level, and 2.7 % to all three income levels (Table 5). From the one hundred nineteen research documents, only 33 (27.7%) provided information on the generational status of the research subjects or family. Some documents provided specific information on the generational status of research subjects/families while others provided less information—thus, it was not possible to determine any research trend for each generational status (first, second, third, etc.). Lastly, 18 (16% out of 119) documents reported parental educational level. Of these, most parents were reported to have less than a high school education. In all, the structures used to differentiate among groups were language, socioeconomic status, and parental level of education while generational status and degree of bilingualism was used to differentiate within the (Mexican) American group.

There are also the *spatial* structures used to differentiate research subjects. The educational literature included a spatial reference for: 1) the place of research implementation, 2) the geographical area/state and 3) the school/community demographics based on ethnicity. The majority of the research studies (about 75.6 %) took place in the school setting/classroom while 11.8 % did not provide specific information (Table 6). The rest of the studies took place at school and/or home (1.7%), university (1.7%), and community centers (3.4%) as well as other combination of research sites. The majority of the research took place in the Southwest (66.4%)—in the states of California, Arizona, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico (Table 7). About 8.2% took place in the Midwest in the states of Illinois and Wisconsin. Twenty three documents (18.8%) did not specify a geographical location. In addition, approximately, 55% (65 out of 119) of the research took place in an urban setting, 33% (39 out of 119) did not specify, 8% (9 out of 119) in a rural setting, and 5% (6 out of 119) in both rural and urban settings (Table 8). Only 28 (23.5%) of the research documents provided some information indicative of school and/or community segregation (Table 9). From these 28 documents, 18 reported that the research subjects attended predominantly (Mexican) American/Latino schools, 4 attended ethnically mixed or predominantly white schools, and six of the documents noted that they lived in segregated neighborhoods or communities.

The comparative framework is one of the main structures that emerged as part of the research design. Seventy-five research documents (63%) employed a comparative analysis that used ethnicity as the primary marker of group differentiation while gender,

language, age, generational status and other were used to a much lesser degree (alone or in combination with ethnicity/other markers) (Table 10). The following provides the number of documents and the type of comparative structure employed by the research: ethnicity in 50 (42% out of 119), language in 11 (9.2% out of 119), grade/age in 11 (9.2% out of 119), gender in 9 (7.5% out of 119), and educational program/curriculums in 7 (5.9% out of 119). It is worthy to note that the comparative analysis based on ethnicity mostly uses whites as the group of reference (58% of 50). Furthermore, the comparative framework inherently places a hierarchical order to the results—e.g. “in spite of gains in achievement, Hispanic students are about twice as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to be reading below average to their age” (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998 cited in Gunn et al., 2000, p. 91). In sum, the representation of (Mexican) Americans within the comparative framework maintains a hierarchical minority-majority relationship in the educational research.

### **Question 3 Summary**

The social, spatial, and comparative structures employed to research subjects reflect several *authority/power* configurations. Foremost, the social and spatial research structures reflect the researcher(s) *authority/power* to select particular information about the research subjects as well as the place/context of research. The researcher, as author, also has the *power* to choose language that either reveals or sanitizes problematic social conditions. In this case, it is worthy to note that few researcher(s) make reference to school/social segregation—it is almost as though there is a *silent presence* about school/residential segregation. The school/residential ethnic divisions are masked and

neutralized by the language of demographics. Likewise, few researchers provide information on the conditions of schools (e.g. financial resources). Secondly, the social markers used to structure the information presented about the research subjects seem to hold the descriptive *authority* to delineate the lives of (Mexican) Americans based on language differences, as well as, poverty and, to a lesser degree, immigration or generational status or family level of education. Thirdly, the *spatial*/physical data on the place of the actual research seems to point to the configuration of *power* that positions schools/classrooms as the primary *spaces* for learning. In relation to research, the school/classroom research *space* reveals the configuration of *authority* that grants researchers the permission to study children in their environment/*natural* context. Fourth, the comparative framework demonstrates a *power* configuration in the production of knowledge that ascribes hierarchical relationship among ethnic groups where the dominant group is the center/point of reference. In all, there are various *power/authority* configurations revealed in the research design, implementation, and results.

## **SITES OF POWER THAT CONSTRUCT MINORITIES AS OBJECTS OF RESEARCH**

### **Question 1. How Are the Discourses Legitimated?**

In the educational literature, there are five prominent sites of *power/authority* that legitimize research discourses. The researchers in the 119 documents consistently used these dominant categories. The stated purpose of the research studies reflects a fundamental form of legitimation. Another important type of validation depends on the



research instruments employed to collect and analyze the data. Discourses are also justified by space given to dissent and contradiction among researchers. Furthermore, the research inherently builds its discourses by using the work of other key research figures—maintaining and sustaining a web of concepts. Lastly, discourses are legitimized in great part based on the unquestioned or taken-for-granted constructs that allow for coherence across discourses.

### **The Purpose of Research**

Researchers legitimized the purpose of research from a perspective of deficiency. It is reiterated that there is a lack of research or insufficient knowledge on ethnic, gender, and/or developmental differences. For example, “little information”, “little is known” or “few studies” have examined the (Mexican) Americans/Latino population in relation to e.g. mathematics anxiety (Suinn, Taylor, & Edwards, 1989), peer victimization (Storch, Phil, Masia Warner, & Barlas, 2003), substance abuse (Zapata & Katims, 1994), or systematic reading instruction (Gunn et al., 2000). Some researchers even state the research has “ignored” Latinos in the research—“Whereas the economic plights of African Americans has been investigated for some time now, Hispanic families, on the whole remain largely ignored in the research literature”(Mistry et al., 2002, p. 948). Some of the research is legitimized because there is a lack of research on (Mexican) Americans/Latinos— “despite the considerable research related to ‘thinking about thinking processes’ studies with Hispanics are nonexistent (Cardelle-Elawar, 1990, p. 166).

In the landmark effort of six volumes, a “national” inventory of television viewing behaviors among U.S. families provides no data on (Mexican) American families (Greenberg & Heeter, 1983, p. 306).

Yet although they are members of the youngest and fastest growing population group in the nation, only limited research has attempted to explain the ways in which Hispanic students go about constructing meaning when reading school material, in either in the first or second language (Langer et al. 1990, p.428).

A second source of legitimation is based on the limited amount of research done in young children on psychological topics such as worry ( Silverman et al. 1995), stress adjustment (Atter et al. 1994), or the AIDS education (Sigelman, Alfred-Liro, Derenowski, Durazo, Woods, Maddock, & Mukai, 1996). This kind of legitimation has a developmental framework that permits the construction of knowledge based solely on age differences and cognitive stages. A third source of research legitimation is the lack of research on ethnic differences—“unfortunately, racial/ethnic differences in the examination of the relationship between children’s cognition and later aggression have largely been *ignored* or underinvestigated” (Samples & CSR, 1997, p.173). Expectedly, language differences is another primary purpose that justifies research practice (and also research design)—“at present there is little research on the effects of cooperative learning on language minority students (Calderón, 1989; Slavin, 1990 cited in Prados-Olmos et al., 1991, p.3).

What is most relevant for this study is that most of the research is legitimized by the idea that research contributes to the growing *body of knowledge*. Few of the research studies (about 3) were contextually bound— with the specific purpose to address a pressing educational *problem/situation* (Bean, 1997; Beaumont et al., 2002; Silverman et al. 1995). For example, district personnel wanted to find a solution to the antagonistic

attitudes found in the district toward second language learners—thus, as a first step, researchers were consulted to gather information on student attitudes (Silverman et al. 1995). Furthermore, the indirect impact of research to educational or social issues is implied by most research documents. For instance, a great portion of the research used psychometric research to validate instruments of intellectual measurement with the underlying purpose that this would possibly lead to the fair assessment of minority students. Therefore, the practice of research in this study was legitimized mostly from the philosophical rationale that research contributes to the blocks of knowledge and this knowledge indirectly impacts the education of (Mexican) Americans.

### **The Eyes and Hands of Research**

A significant portion of the research documents gave careful attention to the validation of the selected research instruments. Given the nature of quantitative research, the educational research provided evidence of the *sound* psychometric properties of the instruments—ensuring validity and reliability.

Previous WISC-R research concerning the factor structure for both regular and special education populations has been well documented (Reynold & Kaufman, 1990 cited in Kush & Watkins, 1994, p. 5).

A couple of studies employed qualitative tasks in conjunction with traditional measures (e.g. Gonzalez, 1994; Sarouphim, 2000); nonetheless, instruments have a primary role in the data collection. In the qualitative research documents, the researcher was typically the main instrument of data collection and analysis although other methods of data collection were employed (e.g. video recording). Whether the method to collect information employs a traditional/alternative measure (e.g. as in the case of alternative

academic measures) and/or a human, the validation of the results significantly depends on the use of the instruments to interpret *truth/reality*<sup>35</sup>. Thus, the instrument(s) represents a major site of *power* in the production of knowledge that functions as a filter processing *truth/reality*. Yet, the instrument is a social construction that can only possess the *authority* granted by the regulations and rules of the community of researchers.

### **A Space for Contradictions and Dissent**

Another site of discourse legitimation takes place in a hypertext dialogue. The educational research contained a considerable amount of contradiction and dissent. Typically, researchers provided a set of contradictory results and later confirmed or contrasted their results to previous research results. For example, researchers provided plenty of contradicting research results on the topics of locus of control, cognitive styles, or self-concept of (Mexican) Americans.

The Mexican American school children's self-concept scores remained relatively stable throughout the school years, increasing slightly as they progressed through school. This is contrary to the claim made by some (Aragon, Note 1; Steiner, 1970) that Mexican American children leave the school system feeling worse about themselves than they did when they entered the system (Franco, 1983, p. 215).

Finally, presumed cultural differences on the personality variables are not supported in this study. This finding is particularly striking with regard to field-dependence-independence in which previous research has reported quite consistent differences (Nelson et al. 1980, p. 332).

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<sup>35</sup> All research documents implicitly assume that there is a *truth/reality* that can be at the minimum represented numerically or categorically.

Furthermore, there was an implicit dissent brought forth by researchers against negative representations of the (Mexican) American family that did not necessarily provide a set of contradicting results, but only reiterated that these families do value education,

In Mexican-American families, the transmission of educational values is shaped by the family's low socioeconomic condition and the parent's low levels of formal education in the U.S. Mexican American parents have viewed the educational system as a means of economic mobility for their children. Thus, education is highly valued (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, p. 496).

Foremost, this hypertext dialogue demonstrates that there is a space in research to argue for a *truth/reality*—but it is a contained space of *oppositional views*. It is an *authority/power* space design for and by researchers that eradicates any other forms of *resistance*<sup>36</sup>. The back and forth dialogue also reflects a dichotomous structure that places research subjects, (Mexican) Americans, on either side of the discourse *truth(facts)* or interpretation of *reality*.

### Use of Experts

Research essentially builds each case (study) based on the work of other researchers. The research documents contained a wide-ranging set of authors that sustained a framework of ideas and concepts. These were assembled in the research study/case at the beginning (literary review) and at the end (the contradiction or confirmation in the results). This was expected, given the structures of modern research. What is of relevance to this study is how, *across* the research documents, there were several key educational experts that sustained the educational discourses on learning and

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<sup>36</sup> About two years ago, I assisted in a research study where one of the research participants asked to be given all the information concerning the study—his resistance/reluctance and questioning of why this community was being researched did not fit into the opposing views of research.

cultural differences. The work of Piaget (1959; 1969) is the most prominent structure that upholds the discourse on children's cognitive development.

Consistent with Piagetian research (e.g. Perrin & Gerrity, 1981; Walsh & Bibace, 1990), third graders had less mature conceptual understandings of both AIDS and flu at the outset of the study than older children (Sigelman et al., 1996, p. 264).

Vigostky (1978) is another prominent figure that maintains the discourse that learning is a socially mediated process.

Assisted performance proves especially helpful in school contexts in which students bring with them culturally-based schemata (Carrell, 1983; Carrell and Eisterhold 1983) that differ from those of their teachers (cited in Bean, 1997, p. 51).

There were also other leading figures that emerged in the literature. Ramirez & Castañeda (1974) and Laosa (e.g. 1979; 1982; 1984) contributed to the discourse on cultural differences.

Mexican families who tend to come from large families that stress mutual dependency and putting the needs of the individual second to the benefit of the whole (Ramirez & Casteneda, 1974) may be more sensitive to peer influences on social orientation (cited in Gumbiner et al., 1981, p. 35).

Laosa (1980) also reported that when compared with Anglo mothers, Mexican-American mothers stressed themes on being sensitive to the feelings and needs of others and showed more reliance on nonverbal messages in mother-child interactions (Machida, 1986, p. 455).

On the other hand, Ogbu (e.g. 1981; 1991) provided a broader perspective on the status of minority groups particularly in relation to the dominant school structures.

The conglomeration of parents' beliefs and behaviors that may work to facilitate children's school achievement in any particular group may be influenced by that group's social context. For example, Ogbu (1986, 1992) has argued that oppression by the majority group forces some minority groups to seek success and rewards outside the mainstream society (cited in Okagaki & Frensch, 1998, p. 141).

Lastly, Cummins (e.g. 1979; 1981; 1984) and Pearl and Lambert (1962) appeared as leading experts in the discourses on bilingualism and cognition<sup>37</sup>.

Two important points emerge from the use of experts by the educational literature. Foremost, this list of experts demonstrates their work has been *authorized*—the knowledge systems have been approved by the community of researchers. These experts represent a boundary of the *sayable*—the knowledge that is accepted and considered to stand as *truth/reality*. Secondly, the work of Piaget exemplifies how knowledge can be naturalized—it maintains the ideology that there is a cognitive development of children<sup>38</sup>. The *naturalization* of knowledge, in this case cognitive development, is palpable, yet almost invisible—the study considers the cognitive development of children by only considering developmentally appropriate tasks/instruments (e.g. Rotherham-Borus & Phinney, 1990, p. 543-544). In conclusion, the use of experts displays other underlying *power/authority* configurations in the reproduction of Western knowledge.

### **The Invisible**

Major research constructs were not defined nor questioned. The constructs of ethnicity and culture stand as one of the primary structures in the research that lacked specificity, conceptualization, and/or questioning. These social constructs held an unquestioned double standard in the educational research. While the research machine discerned the ethnic background of the Other (the (Mexican) American based on last

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<sup>37</sup> See Chapter IV, pp.133-138

<sup>38</sup> It is important to remember that this analysis is not to prove what is *true/ truth* but to analyze the mechanism of a *will to truth*.

name, language, and/or other ethnic signifiers, it maintained the *semi*- invisibility of whiteness<sup>39</sup>. Whiteness was not quite completely invisible because it surfaced as a *governmentality of normativity*. For example, *normative governmentality* was reflected by the implicit and explicit objective that minority children need to “*catch up*” to whites (e.g. Gibbons, 2003, p. 371), or that minority children need to perform to the level of whites. This deeper underlying *normativity* dictates what should be learned, how, and when (as well as who is gifted or with other special needs). In conclusion, the constructs of ethnicity and culture float, in the educational discourse, mostly as a categorization of minority peoples while suppressing the underlying source of measurement, the whiteness that dictates *normativity*.

In addition, there were other constructs that remained at the superficial level. The discourse of development in a few particular instances did question the construction of stages, the sequence/time of sequences. However, the majority assumed that children develop in cognitive stages. Similarly, the discourse on cognition contained some alternative perspectives on intelligence, giftedness, and measurement; nevertheless, the majority did not question the construct of intelligence nor the assumptions about measurement. This seems to indicate that the coherence of a discourse relies, in great part, on assumed or well established forms of knowledge for each construct. Consequently, this can be considered another form of *normativity* that *naturalizes*, for example, differences between children versus adults, the conception of time (linear/sequential), and what is human cognition/thought. Overall, the unquestioned

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<sup>39</sup> Whiteness here is several things: a way of thinking, a person, a culture, and/or a social system.



constructs - in this case ethnicity/culture, development, and human cognition - demonstrate the *authority/power* configuration given to the practice of research to reproduce *normativity* of certain knowledge structures that, in contrast to the expert reference, is not necessarily identified by an author/researcher.

### Question 1 Summary

In a broad perspective, the legitimation of research studies is based on the lack of research/knowledge about (Mexican) Americans on particular subject matters. This deficiency of knowledge reflects the philosophical assumption that the purpose of research is to contribute to a *body* of knowledge. On the other hand, the legitimation of educational discourses is multilevel. An overt site of *authority/power* is displayed by the abundant number of research instruments, including the researcher as an instrument, employed to interpret *reality*. This kind of legitimation contains the philosophical assumption that *reality* can be represented and interpreted (although the methods and the degree to which *reality* may be known vary from each research standpoint). The referencing of major research figures and/or other researchers' work and the space given in research for disagreement/contradictions reflect two closely related sites of *power/authority*. Both entail a *hypertext space* to allow for agreement/disagreement and the *authority* granted by the research community to accept certain kinds of knowledge. The acceptance of certain kinds of knowledge/research seems to lead to the *naturalization/normalization* of knowledge that becomes apparently unquestioned and undefined. Most importantly, these forms of legitimation display a *will to truth* that

contains civilizational assumptions about what is considered to be a valid/trustworthy interpretation of reality.

## **Question 2. Who Is Conducting the Research and Where Is It Conducted?**

An analysis of who is conducting the research is limited by the information provided in the research documents. The majority of the research appears to have been conducted by principal investigators—only a couple of the documents reported assistance in the data collection and data analysis. Those that assisted in the research project were listed as graduate students or trained scorer(s). The information that can be gathered about who conducted the research is constrained by the researcher/author(s) surname and gender. A total of 240 researchers *authored* the research articles (Table 11). From these, 71 (29.6%) of researchers had Latino surnames and 165 (68.8%) had non-Latino surnames. The gender of the researchers was as follows: 133 (55.4%) of the researchers were female while 103(42.9%) were male. This is a more proportionate figure that may reflect the gendered field of education.

Furthermore, the sites of power as *place* can be located in the institutions that support particular social practices such as research. In this study, the majority of the research documents (80.2%) were *authored* by researchers located at institutions of higher education—the university (Table 12). The universities were mostly from the states of California, Arizona, Texas and, to a much lesser frequency, from Colorado, New York, Florida, New Mexico and other states in the country (e.g. Indiana, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Virginia, Michigan, Kansas). A couple of authors/researchers were located at international universities (Japan and Germany). About 12% percent of the research

documents were authored by researchers located in government, research institutes, or school districts. Therefore, in this study, the *university* represents a major site in the production of knowledge/research about (Mexican) Americans. In correspondence to the places where the research took place, the universities are situated mostly in the southwest region of the United States where the Latino population has a high demographical representation (Ramirez, 2004).

In sum, the researchers are the principle *designers/creators*, implementers, and *authors* of the research project. A significant amount of researchers do not have Latino surnames. The trend in this study is that there is about an equal amount of female and male researchers—and female researchers predominate in qualitative studies. The researcher(s) as *author* displays a configuration of power/authority to decide the topic of study, the place and selection of research subjects, and the information that is included/excluded in the research article. Moreover, the university emerges as a key *site of power/authority* that produces knowledge about (Mexican) Americans. But these universities are predominantly located in the United States and this is significant in three ways. First, those directly involved in the education of (Mexican) American children are not producing local knowledge (e.g. community, teachers). Secondly, it keeps the production of knowledge about the Other localized in the United States at the exclusion of a global perspective on language and educational rights of minority groups. Most importantly, the researcher does not leave the U.S. territory to study the Other. Researchers can find the poor, *undereducated* Other within the country—the southwest.

### **Question 3. Who Is Funding the Research Projects?**

The majority of the research documents did not have a funding source. Seventy-seven (64.7%) out of the 119 research projects were not funded while forty-two documents (35.3%) listed government, private, and/or university agencies as the three main funding sources of research projects (Table 13). The federal government represented a main site (source) of (financial) *power* that supported research on (Mexican) Americans/Latinos through two main governmental agencies—the U.S. Department of Education (e.g. Office of Educational Research and Improvement) and the National Institutes of Health (e.g. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development). To a lesser degree, private agencies (e.g. the Spencer Foundation) and university research centers or grants endorsed the research projects. In sum, the federal government emerged as a main site (source) of financial *power* that supports empirical research projects (e.g. on giftedness/literacy). This parallels the current governmental movement to support “rigorous scientific research” (e.g. No Child Left Behind Act, 2002)—the modernist construction of research. In sum, there were no trends between the kinds of research projects and the particular institutions that supported educational research. However, it does lead to the critical question as to why research on (Mexican) American children is scarcely funded.

### **Question 4. Where Is the Research Presented and Displayed?**

The research projects in this study were mainly displayed by three formats: journals, conferences, and/or technical reports (Table 14). Ninety-two of the research studies (74.2%) were presented in educational journals and interdisciplinary journals.

About one third of these were journals specific to the Latinos (e.g. Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences or Bilingual Research Journal). Twenty-three (16%) of the research studies were presented in conferences held mainly in the U.S. For the most part, these research studies were displayed at the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The technical reports were reported to government agencies or research centers (e.g. Sacuzzo et al., 1994b). Overall, the display of knowledge in well-established journals (e.g. Child Development) demonstrates the *authority* granted to the research community (peer reviewers) to determine what is considered legitimate research. The underlying legitimation, however, is based on the Western civilization philosophy that establishes the written word as a site of *authority/power*.

**Question 5. How Are the Research/Knowledge Discourses Creating the Alterity of the (Mexican) American?**

The alterity ascribed to (Mexican) Americans is multileveled and multidimensional. It is multilevel given that there are explicit and implicit constructions of alterity that emerge in the research/knowledge discourses. The alterity constructed about (Mexican) Americans is multidimensional since they are represented as part of an ethnic culture, a minority language group, a researched group, and/or a developmental group (children).

In the research literature, there is an explicit alterity constructed about (Mexican) Americans. As a culture, (Mexican) Americans are described as group oriented—e.g. they “emphasize interdependence and interpersonal involvement but do not particularly prize autonomy and individual achievement” (Baruth & Manning, 1991 cited in Dunn et

al. 1993, p. 243). Thus, the traditional (Mexican) American culture is family oriented and has close cultural ties with Mexico (Ramirez & Castañeda, 1974 cited in Nelson et al., 1980, p. 326), “encourages respect for and subservience to authority, and fosters a passive coping style” (Holtzman, Diaz-Guerrero, & Swarts, 1975 cited in Phinney et al. 1985, p. 6). The (Mexican) American culture is also characterized as a group that emphasizes cooperation, loyalty, and has rigid sex roles as well as strict child-rearing practices (Padilla, 1975 cited in Rivas, 1984, p. 68-69). In this construction of the (Mexican) American culture, the family culture is considered the primary axis of socialization that shapes the child’s behavior,

It has been reported that a Hispanic child often looks down at the floor when being reprimanded but an Anglo child usually looks the teacher in the eyes (Johnson, 1971 and Warren, 1981 cited Machida, 1986, p. 455).

Mexican-American children have been found to be more motivated to achieve for the benefit of the family than for themselves (Inclan & Hernandez, 1992 and Ramirez & Price-Williams, 1976 cited in Kush, 1996, p.563).

And in turn the ethnic/family culture affects *how they should be educated*,

A structured and supportive teaching style may make Mexican-American children feel more secure about assuming internal responsibility for their achievement-related successes and failures (Buriel, 1981a, p. 111).

An emphasis on collaborative learning models is considered to be more consistent with the sociocultural backgrounds of many Mexican-American children (Garcia, 1992 cited in Hess & D’Amato, 1996, p. 364).

Mexican American boys were the most authority-oriented students in the group; such youngsters require frequent encouragement and feedback from their teachers (Dunn et al., 1990, p.72).

In sum, the cultural background of children is regarded as a blueprint of the *educability* of the (Mexican) American child.

Language is one of the major social structures used to construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans. While this has been reiterated throughout this analysis, one more point can be added about this evident alterity. This type of alterity based on language differences creates the bilingual subject. The bilingual subject *in process* is conceptualized as competent,

From this short description, it can be seen that these children had considerable abilities in their first language. The fact that code-switching occurred in their conversations should not be construed as an inability to say those things in Spanish. Studies on code-switching among children have revealed that in order for children to code-switch, they must have a highly developed syntax in both languages (Genishi, 1981; McClure, 1981) (cited in Benjamin, 1996, p.150-151).

The LEP student is someone who is becoming bilingual therefore is gaining access to the cognitive benefits that are thought to accrue to bilingual individuals (Secada, 1991, p. 218).

yet limited in others,

The limited English-speaking child, however, may have difficulties keeping up with normal classroom activities conducted in English (Machida, 1986, p. 457). English learners enter school at all grades with limited or no knowledge of English vocabulary and sentence structure...[they] must work hard to catch up with their English-only counterparts to participate equitably in school (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2001 cited in Gibbons, p.371).

Moreover, the process of becoming a bilingual subject creates a certain degree of apprehension as well as confidence,

It may be that they have become aware of their bilingualism and therefore feel less secure in communicating only in English with a researcher (Rodrigues, 1981, p.854).

It is later, perhaps, when children become more cognitively and linguistically skilled that they develop more confidence and competence in their language brokering skills and the perceived benefits are recognized (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002, p. 377).

The bilingual subject is embedded in a bi-modal culture as opposed to a multicultural context,

For these children, becoming bicultural often means assuming responsibility for interpreting both language and cultural norms and expectations. These children who act as language brokers undergo heightened acculturative stress and the experience of language brokering influences their self-concept and feelings of self-efficacy (Buriel et al., 1998 cited in Weisskirch & Alva, 2002, p. 370).

Bilinguals do not necessarily seem to be torn between two cultures, because speaking a language does not necessarily imply adopting the culture and lifestyle of that community (Shannon, 1995 cited in Stafford et al., 1997, p. 257).

In sum, the bilingual subject is not a static entity; rather, he/she is embedded in a process filled with contradictions—e.g. secure/insecure or competent/limited. This, in part, reflects a paradoxical representation ascribed to (Mexican) Americans as research subjects. Although it is acknowledged that many (Mexican) Americans are native speakers of English and may or not speak Spanish, they still “constitute a major ethnic group that contains many speakers of “non-standard English” (Cronell, 1985, p. 168) and *limited* English proficiency. At the surface, this suggests generational differences and the continued immigration between Mexico and the United States. However, the construction of a bilingual subject overshadows the historical presence of (Mexican) Americans in this geopolitical *space* since pre-colonial times. Furthermore, this focus on language (and cultural) differences, eclipses the sites of power (educational and social systems that hold historical accounts of inequality) that try to *save* (educate) those that have been oppressed and marginalized in the first place. This reflects the contradiction within the Western dominant culture that is continually being projected onto the (Mexican) American subject.



The contradictory projection that a group of marginalized/oppressed people need to be *saved/educated* also reflects a Western research, modernist problem-solving philosophy that constructs research subjects as problems (objects) that can be defined (measured/examined) and solved (changed). But, for the object of research to be changed, the subject must be alterable. Thus, the (Mexican) American as a child epitomizes the ideal research subject. In the widely accepted conceptualization of human development, the child research subject is embedded in sociocognitive stages that limit what she/he can know, learn, think, and do. These sociocognitive limitations of children are considered essential differences while the changeableness is environmental. This is where the (Mexican) American child stands as the model research object. His/her low income environment *positions* and *places* this child to be saved. Under the wings of educational research, knowledge about (Mexican) Americans can be *discovered* and appropriate educational practices can be created or researched to counteract the limited experiential background and home/cultural environment of these children.

There are several critical issues surfacing from this poor, ethnic, child-saving perspective. One is “why are the *needs* of (Mexican) American subjects created and located around the home or culture environment and not more on social structures?” The second critical issue is “what kind of knowledge is *discovered/found* about the (Mexican) American researched subject?” The first critical issue reveals the tendency of the educational research to continue to hold the home culture as the primary socializing agent of children—disregarding the educational system (and other social structures) as sites of power that shape the lives of children. The second critical issue demonstrates

the hierarchical comparative structure in educational research that constructs the (Mexican) American research subjects continually in reference to *whites*. The educational literature is saturated with the *less than white* (e.g. academic achievement performance, career aspirations, and learning opportunities in the classroom), *contradictory* (e.g. self-concept, locus of control, or field dependence/independence) and/or negatively *more than whites* (e.g. poverty, or rates of overt and relational peer victimization) representations of (Mexican) Americans.

In the United States, minority groups are usually compared to the norms of the dominant white group, where the comparison group is higher in status, larger in numbers than the minority group (e.g. Gallimore, Boggs, & Jordan, 1974; Hale-Benson, 1986) (Rotherham-Borus & Phinney, 1990, p. 542).

These comparisons do not necessarily point to *less than* essential/biological differences, but they do place greater significance on the context and social environment. It must be noted that, to a very small degree, the hierarchical comparative research structure was used in the research studies to examine the (Mexican) American research subject only in relation to African Americans (e.g. Storch et al., 2003). However, these comparisons were focused on behavioral ethnic differences and/or low income status. Thus, the majority of the time, the (Mexican) research subject is continually *placed* and *ordered* in relation to the dominant cultural group. Moreover, the placement of minority researched groups in relation to the dominant culture is explicitly stated independent of research/knowledge comparative analysis.

The theoretical framework presented here did not deal with qualitative differences in ethnic identity that result as children have contact with members of their host culture (Bernal et al. 1990, p. 22).

This minority-dominant relationship is legitimized by a biased historical account that grants the dominant culture the status of the *host culture* and minority ethnic groups the status of a contact group that is exposed or comes into contact with this dominant culture.

### **Question 5 Summary**

The research discourses create the alterity of (Mexican) American as instruments of research that build the *body of knowledge* on particular fields of study—in this case, education. One of the mechanisms that create alterity is characterized by the comparative structure of research that orders, judges and places groups of people in relation to the dominant culture. The conceptualization and normalization of human development is another research structure that constructs the alterity of (Mexican) Americans *as children*. Alterity based on linguistic diversity constructs particular human subjects (the bilingual student) that need special attention by the research community and the educational system. The identification of low income groups produces research subjects whose alterity is narrowed to a socioeconomic status. However, both linguistic diversity and socioeconomic status have the underlying framework that research subjects are different than the mythical white middle class. Therefore, the alterity of (Mexican) Americans as research subjects is framed by a minority, low-income, and non-English speaking status. Most worthy of attention is the contradictory subjectivity created about (Mexican) Americans that reflect a Western contradiction—to save the oppressed and marginalized.

## CHAPTER V REVIEW

The following summary brings together the conceptual frameworks and the sites of power that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans. This chapter is based on an examination of the power/knowledge/culture configurations embedded within the educational research discourses via a discourse analysis method. Phase II of the study is strictly based on a postcolonial framework unlike Part I that only added a postcolonial lens to the chapter summary.

The philosophies embedded in the educational discourses all contained Western modernist assumptions about research, education, and the human existence. The principal philosophy that legitimizes research is that it contributes to a growing *body of knowledge*. Consequently, one of the main purposes (legitimation) to conduct research on (Mexican) American children is to *supply* missing knowledge—however, it is knowledge only about difference (ethnic, developmental, or linguistic). Thus, this makes the practice of research an apparatus that (re)produces the alterity of the Other (e.g. the child, the ethnic, or the poor).

The philosophies of education and the human mind are closely associated. The compartmentalized mind creates a space for the measurement of different learning products or processes as well as a space to create (sequential) educational curriculum and interventions. As a result, it brings forth the contradictory modernist assumptions that human behavior is determined by early life experiences and that human beings are only mutable under the right conditions and during critical time periods. This raises a question about what is considered the right conditions (the optimal environment) and

who defines these optimal conditions. In this case, only the researcher and the respective educational experts are granted the *authority/power* to define the best educational practices. The educational research certainly provides numerous expectations about what and how (Mexican) Americans *should* be learning. However, all of these philosophies of learning are contextualized within a Western modernist vision of education and social progress.

Another basic conceptual framework embedded in the educational research discourses is the belief that that human existence is about adaptation. (Mexican) Americans adapt by acculturating to the dominant society and this is best exemplified by bilingual/bicultural subjects. (Mexican) American children also learn coping strategies psychological or social that may be positive or negative (e.g. acculturative stress). This again brings forth the civilizational structures that evaluate what is good/bad adaptive behavior as well as its ways of knowing (e.g. the psychological subject) while selectively obscuring other civilization formations that may create these so called “cultural adaptations” (e.g. colonialism and capitalism).

Furthermore, it is assumed that human existence is about problem-solving. Research itself is structured to define a problem and solve it—mostly through measurement. Yet, the structures of measurement have particular configurations that legitimize the research practice—instruments and statistics. The instruments of research (tasks, tests, scales, observations, interviews, etc.) have been granted *authority* by the research community that approves their application and validity<sup>40</sup>. In turn, the language

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<sup>40</sup> Recently, qualitative research is legitimized by the crystallization of results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

of measurement (statistics) has a space for contradiction that sets research subjects within a pole of dichotomous *truths*. Furthermore, the underlying philosophy that legitimizes the perspective that life entails problem-solving is the notion that understanding *reality* is akin to measurement.

Interestingly, the educational research displays a mechanism that *obscures* multiple discourses about culture, ethnicity, or human development. These invisible/unquestioned discourses are discussed at the most superficial level implying widely acceptable *truths/reality*. The invisibility of discourses, especially in regards to ethnicity, reveals *an educated mind* that has learned to divide the world according to a colonial/modernist vision of racial categories (Willinsky, 1998). Most importantly, it reveals the hegemony of *whiteness* that underlies educational discourses. These unquestioned discourses reflect a Western/white *normativity* that perpetuates civilizational assumptions about human development that position, evaluate, and order ethnic children according to stages and limitations.

(Mexican) Americans were also represented in the research mostly from a philosophy of educational opportunity. This is partly supported by formal and informal history (created by research discourses) that directly/indirectly documents the lack of learning opportunities or the lack of quality education provided to (Mexican) American students. Teacher education (another form of institutionalized knowledge) also sustains the philosophy of equal educational opportunity. The white teaching force perpetuates unequal educational opportunities for (Mexican) American children by treating them differently than white children. Thus, research implicitly takes on an advocacy role that

calls for teacher education reform—a solution to the educational *problem* for the miseducation of (Mexican) American children.

The numerical representation of (Mexican) Americans has ramifications across all regimes of knowledge (disciplines). The educational measurement of student performance as a form of representation has been reiterated in this study. However, in the second analysis it also appears as a form of knowledge that, within the practice of research, depends greatly on the interpretation provided by the researcher(s) to determine if it stands with and/against (Mexican) Americans—thus, giving great *authority/power* to the researchers as well as the research community to approve such interpretations. However, numerical representation of student and school report cards in the media appear to count against this group. In contrast, demographic data pointing to the increasing Hispanic population supports groups such as (Mexican) Americans in research because the *numbers* imply that this minority cannot be easily dismissed or ignored. But this begs the question of who has ignored/dismissed (Mexican) Americans in educational research. Hence, the lack of recognition or consideration exposes the colonial relationships embedded in U.S. society that keeps those *it* chooses to ignore at the margins of research.

Educational law seems to have addressed some important issues that affect (Mexican) Americans—fair assessment, the provision of special language programs, and school segregation—creating some safeguards (federal legal mandates) aimed to protect minority groups. Clearly, this legal mandates are given the *authority/power* to reform educational practices. Nevertheless, given that the application of the law involves other

social systems, the *authority/power* moves to other agents (e.g. schools, teachers, diagnosticians) to apply the law. This demonstrates that *power/authority* oscillates between the different levels of social structure (legal mandates and people). From a postcolonial lens, the privilege given to the written word (legal mandates) manifest a modernist construction of *power/authority*. In all, the Law creates subjects to be simultaneously judged/evaluated and protected by the tutelage of the centre—the dominant culture.

The central agents in the power/knowledge/culture configurations in research practice are evidently the researcher as *author* and the university. The researcher/author has the privilege to choose the topic and design of the study. The author/researcher also has the option to select what information is included about the research subjects and the place of the study. In this analysis, the representation of (Mexican) Americans as research subjects was mostly based on their English language proficiency and socioeconomic status. In the implementation of the design, the majority of the author/researcher(s)' chose a comparative framework and statistical language to represent their objects of research. Furthermore, a great portion of the author/researchers had non-Latino surnames. However, even those Latin surnamed researchers/author projected a Western modernist research practice. This was expected given the university is an established modern/colonial social structure that (re)produces regulated knowledge—knowledge that the research community approves for publication.

Furthermore, the universities in the southwest produced the majority of the research about (Mexican) Americans. Consequently, most of the research subjects were



located in the southwest schools of California and Arizona. More than half of the research documents did not have a funding source for the research project. Those research projects that did have a funding source listed the government, university grants and, to a lesser extent, private institutions. An overwhelming majority of the research documents were published in journals while the minority was presented in national conferences like the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

In conclusion, the central alterity of (Mexican) Americans is that they are instruments of research used to examine human difference. However, this alterity is multilevel and multidimensional. At one level, (Mexican) Americans represent an educational *problem* to be solved. At a deeper level, they are subjects to be known and saved by modern educational research. At the civilizational level, (Mexican) American children represent a group of people that adapts and survives to the *host* society. The multidimensional alterity of (Mexican) Americans depends on what is measured. If they are measured by their educational performance—the results are below standard. On the other hand, the alterity of the (Mexican) American culture depends on the conceptualization of culture/ethnicity as static. For instance, the (Mexican) Americans culture is portrayed as passive, conformist, group-oriented, rigid, and authoritarian—never changing. Another dimension of alterity is that research discourses construct subjects of research. For example, the bilingual subject is constructed by a set of dichotomous characteristics—e.g. secure/insecure or competent/limited. (Mexican) American children are also constructed as psychological definable learners. Their educability is defined by their cultural imprint and the best educational practice

considers their funds of cultural knowledge and teaches them higher order thinking skills. Furthermore, the research discourse *finds* (Mexican) American with a *less than* (positive distinctiveness), *more than* (negative distinctiveness), and *contradictory* subjectivity (like whites and less than whites). Hence, (Mexican) Americans are positioned, placed, valued, and judged under the lens of modern research where differences are *discovered*.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

#### REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study was to provide a postcolonial critique of Western research by examining the conceptual systems employed to construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans. This critique was modeled after Said's (1978) *Orientalism* which provided one of the most detailed examples of the colonial discourse during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Orientalism* (1978) examined the inter-textual discourses across multiple disciplines (literature, science, politics, etc.) and their conceptual systems that sustained a colonial discourse. This analysis had a narrower focus—research in relation to education. However, it, too, examined the inter-textual discourses found across various academic disciplines and their respective conceptual systems that Other (Mexican) American children.

In the first part of the study, the postcolonial lens opened an analytical space to examine the alterity of (Mexican) Americans in education. In postcolonial studies, the concept of alterity is fundamental to understanding colonialism. Alterity stands for the state of difference/diversity where the construction of the self (group) is inherently tied to the construction of the other(s). In the colonial discourse (Said, 1978), the alterity of the Orient/al is constantly placed in an inferior position to that of the imperial/dominant culture. Therefore, one of the main objectives in the study was to delineate the alterity/Otherness of (Mexican-Americans) in the educational research discourse.

The alterity constructed about (Mexican) American children has a constellation of representations. They are primarily represented by underachievement and dropout rates. Each of these main representations expands into other kinds of representations. Underachievement can be identified by other student performance indicators, for example, academic delay or the achievement gap. The drop out representation branches out into other representations—e.g. student *at risk* and the respective lists of school failure predictors. The issue of language differences also permeates the research discourse; consequently, the representations of second language learners diverge not only in description (e.g. Spanish speakers, English Language Learners or Limited English Proficient), but also on how special needs in assessment and educational were constructed for this group. In all, the constellation of representations (re)produce (Mexican) Americans as an educational *problem* and place the family and schools in positions of blame.

In addition, the (Mexican) Americans' alterity is based on the construction of research subjectivities—the second language learner, the ethnic child, and the psychologically definable learner. The bilingual student is characterized by a contradictory subjectivity—e.g. in the process of becoming bilingual, the child is limited in the English language, but competent and cognitively advantaged when fully proficient in two languages. The bilingual research subject is also represented by both normativity and difference—the development of writing and reading skills are similar to monolingual English speakers yet the educational needs require different pedagogical approaches (e.g. collaborative classroom structures). Therefore, the *normativity* is most

salient in the representation of children embedded in *natural* stages of development and the difference is most evident in the inscription of special educational needs.

This parallels the construction of the ethnic research subject. The ethnic child is characterized by a two-fold process that also depicts sameness and difference in relation to the white mythical child. Both the ethnic and mythical white children undergo predictable cognitive stages; however, only the ethnic child is in the process of *adaptation* to two cultural systems. This adaptation/acculturation constantly places the ethnic child in relation to the dominant culture. The ethnic child's identity is hardly ever conceptualized outside a colonial framework. Consequently, research discourses perpetuate margin/centre subject positions that give continuity to a colonial *governmentality* (way of thinking and defining the Other).

In addition, the construction of the research subject placed *in a constant process* of development and adaptation to the dominant culture projects a mutable/changeable subjectivity—that of the psychologically definable learner. (Mexican) Americans as psychologically definable learners are primarily represented by an *educability* that has its blueprint outlined by their culture. Thus, the *educability* of (Mexican) Americans greatly depends on the cultural sensitivity/responsiveness of the educational system to address their *cultural difference* and to improve the quality of education. However, the *educability* of (Mexican) Americans also reflects a deeper underlying subjectivity—a *statu pupillari* that under the *enlightening* Western tutelage is civilized and educated.

The constellation of representations that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans brings forth several issues that need to be considered by the educational

research. First, these representations reaffirm the dominant group's ideologies of difference. Second, they produce multiple types of research subjectivities. Third, these representations position (Mexican) Americans in inferior positions (less than, negatively more than, and in contradiction) to that of the dominant culture. Fourth, they obscure the colonial relationships that contextualize the practice of research. As Buriel (1981b) succinctly notes,

Considering that the American southwest was once part of Mexico, it seems almost paradoxical that psychologists in this country should be studying the acculturation of Mexican immigrants in the United States (p. 4).

Indeed, the irony found in the constellation of representations of (Mexican) Americans is that those that historically and currently have been economically, politically, socially, culturally as well as linguistically marginalized/oppressed are defined and positioned as an enigmatic *problem* to be solved and saved. This contradiction, inherently within the dominant culture, is then projected unto the researched Other.

The second part of the study examined conceptual systems that constructed the alterity of (Mexican) Americans by highlighting the configurations of power/knowledge/culture embedded in the educational discourses. There are several systems of concepts that maintain the coherence of the educational research discourse. These conceptual systems are mostly based on principles of Western psychology,

- the human subject is knowable and measurable
- the human subject develops through predictable cognitive stages
- there is variability (diversity) in human life
- the human mind can be compartmentalized (e.g. conscious/unconscious)

- early human experience determines later life experiences but intervention can change later life/academic experiences.

Other conceptual systems reflected a Darwinist and a male-centered perspective to describe human existence,

- human life entails adaptation
- human life is about problem-solving
- adaptation for ethnic minorities entails learning coping strategies to survive in two cultural systems

Furthermore, the conceptual systems that legitimize research practice have colonial/modernist structures,

- the Other/can be known, defined, and measured by research
- research *explores*, *discovers* and *finds* the Others' difference
- research *sheds light* about the unknown/under-researched Other
- research about the Other is best practiced when conducted in their natural habitat/context.

Moreover, there are particular conceptual systems that are found to be associated with/and or against (Mexican) Americans. The Law demonstrates the *power/authority* granted to the written word (legal mandates) to protect groups of people. Numerical representation, in educational research, shows the *power/authority* to define groups of people (as educationally lacking) and, in the case of demographic research, to be acknowledged (Mexican) Americans can no longer be defined by *invisibility*). Teacher education as a form of institutional knowledge implies a *power/authority* granted to the

colleges of education to prepare teachers for educational reform given the historical unequal treatment of teachers toward (Mexican) Americans. History also grants the *authority/power* to, not only define groups, but to document educational inequalities experienced by (Mexican) American children in the schools. These forms of knowledge centered on the notion that (Mexican) Americans need to be provided with equal educational opportunity—a Western liberal humanist ideology that is inherently problematic because it is based on an individual's opportunity to compete and not on universal educational rights (Spring, 2001).

Moreover, there are other power/knowledge configurations established in research as social practice. The researcher as author holds the *power/authority* to decide what, who, where, and how to conduct research. On the other hand, researchers, as a community of scholars, hold the *power/authority* to approve the publication of research, whether in journals or conferences. Furthermore, the university emerges as a primary site of *power/authority* that (re)produces research about (Mexican) Americans.

Although few of the research documents in this study had institutional support to do research on (Mexican) Americans, the government, private organizations, and university grants illustrated how funding sources represent another site of *power/authority* that contributes to the production of knowledge. However, these sites demonstrate external *power/authority* configurations in the practice of social research.

There are also internal *power/authority* configurations established within the research document that legitimize the production of knowledge about (Mexican) Americans. The instruments employed in the research project represent a major site of



*power* that is regulated by guidelines for each research approach (e.g. psychometric properties in quantitative research). The referencing of experts demonstrates how the *sayable* is bound by the establishment of what is held to be an acceptable fact/*truth* (e.g. cognitive development). In turn, the acceptance of *truth(s)* reflects an invisible site of *power* where the standard of measurement and comparison is the mythical, white *normativity*. The space for contradictions within the research documents illustrate a site of *power/authority* that grants researchers the right to argue from opposing views/research results—thus, limiting the kind of opposition and restricting the agency of the researched to resist/oppose the research project. Both the internal and external sites of *power/authority* illustrate the regulatory dynamics embedded in the production of knowledge that privileged only to researchers and the community of scholars.

In sum, the research studies illustrate the discursive formations that hold the *poor, ethnic, linguistically diverse* (Mexican) American/Other as a common object of analysis. These discursive formations express a common mode speaking, representing, perceiving the Other that are based on the Western assumptions of *normativity*. The conceptual systems maintain the alterity of (Mexican) Americans by projecting a Western vision of education and human existence and by eclipsing social oppression and marginalization. Hence, the research discourses are embedded in a *power/knowledge/culture* configuration that gives primacy to the Western colonial/modern methods of defining, ordering, evaluating, and placing the Other, the (Mexican) American, in positions less than the perceived ideal *whiteness*.

## **RESEARCH AS A COLONIAL APPARATUS THAT (RE)PRODUCES DIFFERENCE**

This study deconstructs the production of knowledge about (Mexican) Americans based on the postcolonial lens of alterity. It illustrates that educational discourses construct constellations of representation and create multiple research subjects based on difference. The main methods to (re)produce difference are measurement and the use of the comparative framework. This indicates that research is a modern apparatus that (re)produces difference. However, the (re)production of difference does not necessarily mean that the (Mexican) American child is “essentially an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality” (Said, 1978, p. 5). Indeed, there are children learning a second language, children that live in poverty, and children that do not meet academic standards that come from an American culture that has Mechica/Mexican ancestry. However, not all (Mexican) American children are poor, underachieving, or necessarily ethnic (may only have a Latin surname but no ties to the Mechica/Mexican culture)<sup>41</sup>. Thus, the critical issue with the production of difference is that it has a colonial structure that establishes alterity in a hierarchical framework where the (Mexican) American is not only defined in relation to the colonizer (dominant structures) but she/he is constantly less than, below, or behind the standards created by the dominant culture. Another critical issue is that the (Mexican) American child is restricted mostly to negative representations. These negative representations provide historical continuity to the

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<sup>41</sup> Ethnic minority children lack of identification to the e.g. Mexican culture is closely tied to the issues of intellectual colonization, de-indianization, and deculturalization (Bonfil, 1996; Rivas, 2004; Spring 2000).

portrayal of (Mexican) Americans as an educational *problem*.<sup>42</sup> The (re)production of difference has other implications that are discussed as part of some of the considerations researchers need to address in the practice of research.

## **RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PRACTICE AS WESTERN, MODERN, AND COLONIAL**

It is not unexpected to find that the conceptual frameworks that construct the alterity of (Mexican) Americans hold a Western modern vision of research, education, and life considering that the research was produced in the U.S. and that the university is a modern/colonial structure. These Western modern visions reflect how researchers hold particular ontological, epistemological, and methodological paradigms to which they have been trained by their respective research communities/university. After all, the production of knowledge is socially situated. What is unexpected is the Western hegemony entrenched in the research. Not one single research discourse offered a theory or conceptualization alternate to Western thought. Thus, the critical issue with having a hegemonic Western/modern paradigm is that it suppresses other philosophies that view human existence outside of a Darwinist, secularized, male centered perspective. It limits the diversity of views about research, education, and human existence offered, for example, by an indigenous perspective. The second critical issue is that a Western modern research perspective perpetuates an ethnocentrism that neglects to consider the language and educational rights of minority groups from a global perspective (Spring, 2001). However, the main critical issue with the hegemonic

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<sup>42</sup> See Chapter II, p. 54.

Western modern frame of thought is that it holds a privileged position in the production of knowledge. It reflects a particular culture's (the West) interpretation of the Others and their *realities* as *truth*. Hence, the practice of research colonizes as long as it holds itself to be the only *legitimate* interpretation and these interpretations are imposed onto the Other.

### **A WILL TO TRUTH IS A WILL TO POWER**

The production of knowledge entails representation (Foucault, 1970 cited in Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 66-68) and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 33). In turn, both representation and interpretation involve the regulation and systematization of knowledge. All things represented and interpreted (e.g. people in racial categories or results in statistical tables or categories) are restricted by the rules of the discursive formation—the research protocol. The purpose of the research study must be justified. The methods must adhere to the established guidelines of the respective research paradigms. The results must be interpreted in regards to other research *findings* producing contradictory/confirmatory interpretations of *reality*. Then the research needs to be approved or disapproved by a community of scholars. In the end, data is considered knowledge once it has to been systematized and regulated—willed to *truth*. The caveat in the production of knowledge is that a *will to truth* delimits the *sayable*. Delimitation of the *sayable* is reflected in the repeatability of the discourse legitimizing what is considered *true* and by the silencing of other discourses, theories, methodologies, and purposes of research. For example, the (Mexican) American child is only discussed within the boundaries of an educational *problem*, an ethnic culture in relation to the

dominant culture, and/or a psychological identity. Moreover, a *will to truth* is a *will to power* because the production of knowledge has a process that entails diverse sites of *authority* (research rules that establish what is considered legitimate). Nevertheless, research demonstrates a *will to truth* and *power* because it imposes a linguistic order to things, ideas, and peoples (Foucault, 1970) and projects a local yet global statement about the non-Western world (Mignolo, 2000). The only difference about the *will truth* and the *will to power* in the production of knowledge about the (Mexican) American child is that they are the non-Western world within the margins of the Western world. Thus, the (re)production of difference by the research apparatus is not a global projection but intimate portrayal of the colonial Western thought perpetuating separateness.

## **RESEARCH ABOUT THE *OTHER* RECONSIDERED**

Research has Western modern/colonial conceptual systems and sites of *power/authority* that conflict with the self-determination of minority groups/communities to conceptualize and theorize about their own existence, as well as, to determine the direction and purpose for the production of knowledge/research (Smith, 2002). Even when research is conducted by minority researchers, the conflict remains given that the researcher as *author* has the privilege to determine what, who, and how the research is conducted. Moreover, minority researchers trained in the university may still project the modern/colonial Western framework because they have limited exposure to learn and apply other worldviews and methodologies (Rivas, 2004). This applies in the same way to non-minority researchers who are embedded in an invisibility of

*whiteness* and ethnocentrism. Therefore, the fundamental conflict of self-determination exists in the production of knowledge when minority groups are used as instruments of research.

Furthermore, the practice of research replicates asymmetrical power relations. Children are objects of research—they are “observed, measured, judged and otherwise manipulated” (Cannella, 1997, p. 170). Likewise, minority groups are theorized and written about, hence, represented under the researchers’ enlightened constructs and paradigm. Even when minorities are *granted a voice* and conferred with about the *findings*, the question remains as to who benefits from the research and to what extent is participation equal and democratic. Therefore, it is inevitable that research as a social practice needs to consider the asymmetrical power relations between the researcher(s) and the researched.

It is important that the academic community address the concern that research is a social apparatus that (re)produces difference. The production of difference stands one of the neocolonial faces of oppression,

The dominant culture’s stereotyped, marked, and inferiorized images of the group must be internalized by group members at least to the degree that they are forced to react to behaviors of others that express or are influenced by those images... This consciousness is double because the oppressed subject refuses to coincide with these devalued, objectified, stereotyped visions of herself or himself. The subject desires recognition as a human, capable of activity, full of hope and possibility, but receives from the dominant culture only the judgment that he or she is different, marked, or inferior (Young, 1992, cited in McLaren, 2003, p. 37).

Thus, the construction of difference in research has the danger of becoming a new form of cultural imperialism that positions the Other as both *different* and invisible (in this case powerless over the research project) by the dominant culture (McLaren, 2003).

Apart from the critical issues that 1) Latino and other groups have the right to self-theorizing and determination in the production of knowledge and 2) that critical questions need to be addressed about the construction of difference and asymmetrical power relations, research as social practice has one crucial matter to reconsider—the purpose to conduct research. In this literature, a couple of the research studies were contextualized by a social dilemma/school issue<sup>43</sup> but most claimed the pursuit of knowledge about the under-researched/formerly invisible Other as the purpose of research. This represents an Enlightenment/modernist vision about research that not only perpetuates colonialism but re-establishes it,

Knowledge that does not go beyond contemplating the world and observing it objectively without transcending given social conditions merely affirms what already exists (McLaren, 2003, p. 197).

There are oppressive social conditions that need to be confronted and this pursuit of knowledge is not changing any of them. However, research may offer a possibility to assist in *making a difference*. Unlike a utopian modernist belief that science can *change* the social world, research seems to offer some possibilities as a tool of resistance. This study exemplifies research used as a tool of resistance that deconstructs the conceptual systems that produce knowledge about the Other and that exposes the configurations of knowledge/power/Western culture. This type of research represents one form of

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<sup>43</sup>See Chapter V, p. 184.

dismantling the superordinate structures of research (e.g. modernity, Eurocentricism, and the racialized discourse). Therefore, the critique of research is importantly necessary in the academic world—cultural imperialism transforms and reproduces. Admittedly though, addressing intellectual colonialism is not sufficient to change the social conditions of racism, poverty, labor marginalization or other social injustices in this era of globalization.

Nevertheless, there may be other examples where research can assist in social transformation. For example, Latino students can document the oppression they experience in schools and take their research to petition for school reform. Similarly, research on the unequal resources received by predominantly Latino schools may help in the uphill battles for the allocation of school funds. In conclusion, educational research can be a tool of resistance and assistance when possessed and employed by communities and people that act toward educational rights and social justice.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Postcolonialism is a theoretical perspective in the Western academy that has its foundations in the social, economic, and intellectual oppression and marginalization of people. It opens the analytical space to acknowledge and recognize (Mexican) Americans beyond ascribed research subjectivities—this group, as a postcolonial culture, has a historical and social reality in the United States and more importantly a humanity that cannot be reduced by the dominant culture's order, value systems, classifications or categories.



However, the alterity ascribed to (Mexican) Americans expands to other social practices beyond research. Other social practices, such as the media, have far more reaching, highly problematic consequences. The media as an apparatus that (re)produces difference perpetuates colonialist structures, for example, that place systemic issues of racism, immigration, or access to higher education at the individual level to support flawed arguments of reverse discrimination, economic crisis, or meritocracy. Therefore, one possible research direction is to deconstruct the media and set an activist agenda to challenge its colonial structures and practices.

In conclusion, to challenge conceptual systems and social practices that ascribe alterity by the dominant culture to other postcolonial cultural groups is one form of decolonization. Moreover, it is important to recognize that alterity represents more than just ascribed negative stereotypes—although a constellation of representations is the most visible aspect. It is about the multiple mechanisms employed to construct difference, the common modes of perception, and the conceptual systems that maintain discourse (*what is said*, the sites of power, and social practices). Thus, an ascribed alterity is about the dominant culture's *will to truth* and *will to power* that reflect systemic and social relationships of inequality. It is the mirror of the dominant, collective self still possessing an imagined separateness from the Other.

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## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH DOCUMENTS (119) AS UNIT OF ANALYSIS

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**APPENDIX B**  
**DOCUMENT WORKSHEET**

Basic Information
-------------------

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Journal /Type  
Publication \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects of Study
-------------------

Children \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom/program \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### DOCUMENT WORKSHEET

Topic
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Topic of article \_\_\_\_\_

#### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

1. Through what philosophical lens are (Mexican) Americans represented? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What forms of knowledge are associated with and/or against (Mexican) Americans? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How are (Mexican) Americans represented in research design, implementation, and results? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Research Approach \_\_\_\_\_
  - Comparison Framework: yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Group (s) of comparison \_\_\_\_\_

#### SITES OF POWER/AUTHORITY

1. How are the discourses legitimated? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is conducting the research and where is it conducted?
  - Gender Female \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_
  - Surname Latino \_\_\_ non-Latino \_\_\_
3. Who is funding the research projects? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where is the research presented and displayed?
  - Journal \_\_\_ Conference \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How are the research/knowledge discourses creating the alterity of the (Mexican) American? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### TABLES

Table 1 Laws	
	Number of Documents
Non-Discriminatory Assessment	
P.L. 94-142 1975/IDEA 1997	10
<i>Larry P. vs. Wilson Riles</i> , 1972	6
<i>Diana vs. State Board of Education</i> , 1970	1
<i>Guadalupe vs. Tempe Elementary School District</i> , 1972	1
<i>Hobson vs. Hansen</i> , 1972	1
Provision of Special Language Programs	
<i>Lau vs. Nichols</i> , 1975*	6
Bilingual Education Act 1964	4
Segregation	
<i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> , 1954	7
Other	
Goals 2000 Educate American Act	1
Proposition 227	1
Specific to states (CA & CO)	6
*may be placed under non-discriminatory assessment	

<b>Table 2</b> <b>Numerical Representation</b>		
Statistics in Research Documents		
Tables		290
Figures		87
	<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>
Demographic Data*		
Latino Population Increase		18
Birth Rates		3
Language Minority Population		7
Minority Population Increase in Schools		8
Minority Children Living in Poverty		5
Immigration		2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>
Education*		
Achievement		31
Drop out Rates		28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>
*Number of documents that cite statistics/make general statements about these topics.		

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Research Approach</b>		
Quantitative	92	83.2%
Qualitative	20	16.8%
Both	7	6.0%
	<b>119</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Structures of Representation</b>		
	Number of Documents	
Language	73	61.3%
Socioeconomic Status	75	63.0%
Generational Status	33	27.7%
Parental Level of Education	18	15.1%

<b>Table 5</b> <b>Socioeconomic Level of Researched Subjects</b>		
Low income level	55	73.3%
Middle income level	5	6.7%
Low & Middle level	12	16.0%
Middle & Upper level	1	1.3%
Low, Middle, & Upper Level	2	2.7%
Total Number of Documents	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Table 6</b>			
<b>Sites of Research</b>			
<b>Implementation</b>			
School/classroom	90	75.6%	
Home	2	1.7%	
University	2	1.7%	
School & Home	4	3.4%	
School & Home & University	1	0.8%	
Community Centers	4	3.4%	
School & Community Center	1	0.8%	
Home & Community Center	1	0.8%	
Not Specified	14	11.8%	
Total	<i>119</i>	<i>100%</i>	



<b>Table 7</b> <b>Region of Research Studies</b>			
Southwest		81	66.4%
	Arizona	14 **	
	California	38 **	
	Colorado	4	
	New Mexico	3 **	
	Texas	14 **	
	Southwest-nonspecific*	4	
Midwest		10	8.2%
	Illinois	6	
	Wisconsin	2	
	Midwest-nonspecific*	1	
	**Indiana	**	
Northwest		3	2.5%
	Utah	1	
	Washington	2	
South		2	1.6%
	Florida	1	
	Southeast-nonspecific*	1	
	**Tennessee	**	
Northeast		3	2.5%
	New York	3	
Multisite Studies**			
	Arizona, California, & New Mexico	1	
	Tennessee, Texas, & Indiana	1	
Not Specified		23	18.8%
		<i>119</i>	<i>100%</i>
*These research studies did not specify the state only the region.			
**The multisite states were added to the region for percentage calculations. Therefore the total number of states listed was 122.			

<b>Table 8</b> <b>Type of Setting</b>		
Urban	65	54.6%
Rural	9	7.6%
Urban & Rural	6	5.0%
Not Specified	39	32.8%
	<i>119</i>	<i>100%</i>

<b>Table 9</b> <b>School/Community Demographics</b>			
No information on school/community demographics		<b>91</b>	<b>76.5%</b>
Information on school/community demographics		<b>28</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
School		22	
	Latino	18	
	Mixed	4	
Community Segregation		6	

<b>Table 10</b> <b>Comparative Research Structure</b>			
Comparative Framework		75*	63.0%*
Ethnicity		50**	42.0%**
	Latinos & Whites	29	58.0%
	Latinos, African-American, & Whites	7	14.0%
	Latinos & African-American	8	16.0%
	Multiethnic	6	12.0%
Language		11**	9.2%**
Grade/Age		11**	9.2%**
Gender		9**	7.6%**
Program		7**	5.9%**
Total		88**	
<p>*These are the number and percentage of documents that used the comparative framework.</p> <p>**The total number of comparative analysis overlapped in some research documents (e.g. age and ethnicity compared).</p> <p>**These percentage calculations used the total number of research documents (119).</p>			

<b>Table 11 Researchers</b>					
Latino surnamed	71	29.6%	Female	133	55.4%
Non-Latino surnamed	165	68.8%	Male	103	42.9%
Latino & non-Latino surname	4	1.7%	Unknown	4	1.7%
*There were some authors that appeared in multiple articles so they were only counted once but the total number of authors was 268					

**Table 12**  
**Researcher Locations**

<b>UNIVERSITIES</b>		<b>215</b>	<b>80.2%</b>
Arkansas	1	Missouri	1
Arizona	32	Nebraska	2
California	83	North Carolina	1
Colorado	13	New Mexico	5
Connecticut	2	New York	15
Florida	7	Penselvania	2
Indiana	2	Tennessee	1
Illinois	7	Texas	21
Kansas	5	Virginia	3
Lousiana	1	Washington, D.C.	1
Maryland	1	Wisconsin	3
Michigan	4	International	2
<b>SCHOOLS</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
Arizona		3	
California		2	
Illinois		1	
New York		2	
Texas		5	
Virginia		1	
<b>OTHER</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
ARC Associates Inc. (CA)		1	
Center for Educational Statistics (U.S. Dept. of Education)		1	
Children's Fund Organization(Washington, DC)		1	
CSR Inc. (Washington, DC)		1	
Educational Research and Development (Los Alamitos, CA)		1	
Institute of Mental Health, Japan		1	
Max Plank Institute for Human Development and Education (Germany)		2	
Northern Rocky Mountain Education Research Association, (CO)		3	
Oregon Research Institute		4	
Project Evaluation Office (Washington, DC)		1	
Success for All Foundation, Maryland		1	
The Fielding Institute		1	
WestEd Educational Laboratory, CA		1	
<b>NOT SPECIFIED</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<i>Total:</i>		<i>268</i>	<i>100%</i>

<b>Table 13</b> <b>Funding Sources</b>		
Number of Research Studies Not Funded	77	<b>64.7%</b>
Number of Research Studies Funded	42	<b>35.3%</b>
<b>Government Funding</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>55.6%**</b>
Center for Disease Control and Prevention	1	
Children's Defense Fund	1	
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)	6	
National Institute of Education	2	
National Institutes of Health*	4	
National Institute of Mental Health	5	
National Science Foundation	1	
U.S. Department of Education*	13	
U.S. Department of Health and Welfare	1	
Wisconsin Department of Work Force Development	1	
<b>Private Funding</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27.0%**</b>
Annie E. Casie Foundation	1	
Ford Foundation	2	
Helen Bader Foundation	1	
Hogg Foundation	2	
John D. AND MacArthur Foundation	1	
Kinley Trust	1	
National Council of Teachers of English Research Foundation	1	
Pinkerton Foundation	1	
Psychological Studies of Social Issues	1	
Spencer Foundation	4	
William T. Foundation	1	
Unspecified local corporation	1	
<b>University Funding</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14.3%**</b>
Academic Senate (UCLA)	1	
College of Liberal Arts (ASU)	1	
Educational Research Center, NMSU	1	
Faculty Research Funds (UC, Santa Cruz)	1	
Hispanic Research Center (ASU)	1	
Graduate School of Education (UCLA)	1	
Linguistic Minority Research Project (UCLA)	1	
University of Denver	1	
Wisconsin Center for Education Center	1	
<b>Research Projects</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.2%**</b>
Educational And Community Change Project	1	
San Antonio Literacy Project (SALP)	1	
Total Number of Funding Sources	<b>63**</b>	
*Different government offices and centers funded research studies.		
**Some research studies were multifunded so the total number used for these percentages is 63.		

**Table 14**  
**Research Display**

<b>JOURNALS</b>		<b>*92</b>	<b>74.2%</b>
American Educational Research Journal	3	Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development	3
American Journal of Mental Deficiencies	1	Journal of Negro Education	1
Anthropology & Education Quarterly	1	Journal of Research in Science Teaching	1
Child Development	5	Journal of School Psychology	5
Child Study Journal	1	Modern Language Journal	1
Developmental Psychology	1	Perceptual and Motor Skills	1
Education and Urban Society	1	Professional School Counseling	1
Educational Horizons	1	Psychology in Schools	6
Equity & Excellence in Education	1	School Psychology Quarterly	1
Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities	1	Social Development	1
Health Education Quarterly	1	Social Justice	1
International Migration Review	1	Texas Tech Journal	1
Issues in Applied Linguistics	1	The Elementary School Journal	4
Journal for Just and Caring Education	1	The Journal of Educational Research	3
Journal of Child and Family Studies	1	The Journal of Special Education	2
Journal of Clinical Psychology	1	NABE-The Journal	3
Journal of Clinical Child Psychology	1	Bilingual Research Journal	6
Journal of Cross-Cultural psychology	2	Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences	16
Journal of Drug Education	1	International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism	1
Journal of Education of the Gifted	1	Aztlán--International journal of Chicano Studies in Research	1
Journal of Educational Psychology	2	Journal of Latinos and Education	1
Journal of Language and Social Psychology	1	TESOL Quarterly	1
Journal of Learning Disabilities	1		
<b>CONFERENCES</b>		<b>*23</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
American Educational Research Association (AERA)		12	
American Psychological Association Convention		1	
Annual Conference on Language Development		1	
Annual Conference on Piagetian Theory and Helping Professions*		1	
Annual Meeting of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE)		3	
Annual Meeting of the Northern Rocky Mountain Education Research Association		1	
Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development		1	
International Communication Association Convention*		1	
International Congress for Individual Instruction		1	
Proceedings from ACRES/NRSSC Symposium		1	
<b>TECHNICAL REPORTS</b>		<b>*8</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<b>UNSPECIFIED</b>		<b>*1</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>*124</b>	
*The total number adds to more than 119 because some portions of the study were also presented at conferences and/or technical reports. Percentages were calculated based on the 124 total.			

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### Education

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### Publications

Demas, E., Cannella, G.S., & Rivas, A. (2003). Conservative foundations and the construction of public regulatory curriculum or methods that use poor children to reinscribe dominant power. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 19(3), 107-124.

### Presentations

Rivas, A. (2005). Postcolonial Examinations of Research Perspectives that would Construct and Save the Other. 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, Urbana-Champaign, ILL.

Rivas, A. (April, 2004). Colonized Minds in Academic Research Practice. American Educational Research Association Conference, San Diego, CA.

Rivas, A., Peterson, C., Anhalt, K. & Cannella, G. (2003) School Psychology: A Critique of its Past and Current Practices and the Possibility for Reconceptualization. BERGAMO Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, Dayton, OH.

Rivas, A., Demas, E., & Cannella, G.S. (January, 2003). Reconceptualizing the Purposes, Boundaries, and Methods of Research. 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on the Reconceptualization of Early Childhood Education, Phoenix, AZ.

Cannella, G.S., Viruru, R., Rivas, A., & Demas, E. (2003). International Critical Research Collaborative on Family/Child/Community Policy. 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on the Reconceptualization of Early Childhood Education, Phoenix, AZ.

Cannella, G.S., Demas, E., & Rivas, A. (2002). Curriculum as Public Regulatory Discourse: Using Poor Children to Legislatively Reinscribe Heteronormativity and Gender Bias. BERGAMO Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, Dayton, OH.